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METHODISM IN SHEFFIELD,

&c. &c.

George, Wainwright, Dore, Aged 107



Born January 1714. Taken April 11th 1821.



Mr. W. Woodhouse, Hallam, Mr. S. Birks, Thorpe.

Aged 91.

Aged 95.

Born 1727, taken April 10. Born 1725, taken Oct 27.

1821.

1820.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
WESLEYAN METHODISM,
IN SHEFFIELD
AND ITS VICINITY.

BY JAMES EVERETT.

"Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."—HEB. x, 32.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I. *3 vols. per. bound*

SHEFFIELD:
PRINTED BY JAMES MONTGOMERY, IRIS-OFFICE:
SOLD BY MISS GALES, SHEFFIELD; AND T. BLANCHARD,
14, CITY-ROAD, AND 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW,
LONDON.

1823.

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THE Second Volume, which will complete the work, and
which is now in the Press, may be expected at no distant
period.

never!

see ch 19 + 20 at end
of this Vol.

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PREFACE.

TRACING a Christian Society to its origin is like tracking a river to its source. We see it bubbling at the fountain head, widening as it proceeds, being increased by various tributary rivulets, brooks, and streams; now brawling with impetuosity among the stones, and now gliding in deep and silent majesty; the traveller, meanwhile, as he passes along, delighting himself with the flowers and meadows which adorn its banks, and not unfrequently contending with almost insurmountable difficulties in the prosecution of his design, arising from bogs, woods, and precipices, but the whole tending to enliven and give variety to the scene. Small indeed was the source from whence Methodism seems to have taken its rise in this part of the country, and feeble and unpromising its moving cause. The one may be traced to Heely, the other assigned to David Taylor.

It has long been the wish of the present writer to see a work giving a detailed account of the introduction of Methodism into the different cities, towns, and villages, in England, accompanying its progress, and illustrating by short biographical notices and striking anecdotes, the Providence and Grace of God. A work of this nature was suggested by Mr. John Kershaw; and the attention of the preachers was directed to the subject by an article which he forwarded to the editor of our Magazine, and which was inserted some years ago; the editor himself urging the necessity of promptitude in the execution, and assigning as a reason, the

rapid removal of all the old members, with whom, if no means are employed to secure it, a considerable portion of the early history of Methodism must die.* Though the author of this local history never lost sight of the importance and necessity of such a work from the period when he conversed upon the subject with Mr. Kershaw, yet, like others, he permitted years to pass away without any direct attempt towards its commencement or

* The following is the substance of the article forwarded to the editor, dated from Bridlington, Dec. 4, 1816, and signed PAULUS:—

“Sir,—I have often thought that a topographical history of Methodism, though upon a small scale, would, on several accounts, be a very desirable thing to us as a people. It should, in my opinion, be of the following description. Where we have a chapel erected, I would propose that a record should be drawn,—1. Of the introduction of Methodism into that place, by whom, in what manner, and under what circumstances it obtained a footing there. 2. Of the origin of that chapel; or, if not the *first* chapel in that place, then of any other that may have preceded it; what circumstances of an interesting nature attended its erection, &c. with any other matter that might tend to display the mercy and providence of God. Such a history would develope to many of the present generation, and also, if carefully preserved, to future generations, much of Divine Providence; it would, if properly executed, afford a rich repast to many pious persons resident in those places, who feel a peculiar interest in the rise and spread of Methodism, and the work of God in their respective neighbourhoods, and would serve to endear to them that work, and many of those chapels. In short I conceive that several important ends would be accomplished by means of such a publication.

“I am led to transmit these observations to you, from the circumstance of my having lately met with a letter addressed to our late father in the Gospel, upon the subject of introducing Methodism into Bridlington Quay, in the county of York. It is a specimen, as far as it goes, of what I include in my idea of the proposed history. If you think this subject worth the attention of your numerous readers, and that the few observations I have made upon it merit publicity, their early insertion in your miscellany will be gratifying to your constant reader.”

On this occasion, Mr. Beeson remarks,—“With this correspondent we are decidedly of opinion, that by such a history as he mentions, several important ends would be accomplished. Materials sufficient for so desirable a work may be collected from Mr. WESLEY’s early Journals; —from the information which several of the senior preachers of our connexion can furnish; —and from that which may be obtained from many of the oldest leaders or private members in our societies. It is to be lamented that such a work was not projected and entered upon while many of the first race of Methodist preachers were living—men who could, from their own personal knowledge, have furnished some important matter, which cannot now be obtained, for such an undertaking. But still it is not too late to enter upon the work; nor, if it is to be done, ought there to be the least delay in procuring materials for it, as every year several of our brethren, who can furnish some, are dropping, one after another, into eternity.—We request such of our brethren in their respective circuits as are of opinion that such a history as that proposed would be useful in our connexion, to begin, as soon as possible, to collect materials.”—METH. MAG., 1817, p. 222, 223.—*The Magazines consulted after the year 1810 are the One Shilling numbers, or the enlarged edition.*

completion. Being stationed in Sheffield, and unable for some months, through indisposition, to take the regular work of the circuit, he again directed his attention to the subject, and began in the month of February, 1821, to collect materials for a local history of Methodism in Sheffield and its vicinity.

Trifling as the undertaking may seem, it was not without its difficulties; but these became less formidable as the author proceeded. The *first* race of people, with the exception of the three patriarchs, whose portraits are affixed to the work, were all removed before any thing was written; and even of these three, Methodism had existed in these parts some time, before the attention of two of them was particularly directed to it. The *second* race, rather more numerous, served as a connecting link between the primitive Methodists, with whom they conversed, and the Methodists of the present day. But in both cases the author found the memory defective in many instances. This was not a little forbidding, and helps to memory became necessary. As these were employed, the vista which opened to the distance of original Methodism was streaked with a succession of rays of light, the path became more plain, and the prospect expanded as steps were taken to secure a fuller and clearer view.

The plan adopted and pursued by the writer, and which he notices as a kind of hint to any who may be disposed to succeed him, and who, through it, may be able to strike out a more excellent way, was simply this:—a blank leaf book was procured, in which to insert every thing of moment as it was obtained; not depending upon the memory for any thing, as a thought, once lost, is often for ever lost. At the close of this, a proper index was formed, for the sake of reference. But as different facts, relating to the same time, places, persons, and things, were obtained at different periods, and for which a proper portion of blank leaves could scarcely be preserved, a certain space was appropriated solely to dates, in order to expedite the arrangement of the materials afterwards. For this purpose two columns were prepared, one for the years, noticing each year in its succession down the

middle of the lines, and the other, much broader, for the pages of the book, directing the eye to the scattered facts recorded. By a reference to these, all that occurred during the year was seen at a single glance, and brought together with perfect ease when preparing a correct chronological statement. In procuring historical facts the work was more laborious than difficult. All that was necessary was, to run through the whole of Mr. WESLEY's Journals, the Methodist Magazines, the Minutes of Conference, Mr. Myles's Chronological History, together with other promising publications, and to make a memorandum of every thing connected with Sheffield and its neighbourhood. Traditional knowledge was the most desirable ; and for this, the writer, by his historical researches, was partly prepared. Having the principal part of his historical inquiries recorded, he inserted on a piece of paper, opposite to the years, the names of all the preachers who had travelled in these parts. With these preparations he inquired after the oldest members of society, and of persons connected with Methodism, and visited them personally. To these he proposed different questions, and after obtaining and making a minute of all he could acquire, in a regular way, thus securing whatever was floating, so to speak, on the surface of the memory ; he then adverted to his list of preachers, to Mr. WESLEY's visits to the neighbourhood, as recorded in his Journals, and to the facts noticed in the Magazines, and other books. The bare notice of these awakened other recollections, and produced interesting facts, which, but for these means, must have slumbered with the possessors in the tomb. To avoid losing any thing, and for the sake of correctness, his visits were repeated, new facts occurred, an occasional error was corrected, and his stock of knowledge was increased : always taking care to repose the greatest confidence on the most perfect memory, the clearest head, and the most established piety, not forgetting to look at any collateral evidence that made its appearance from other quarters.

Never can the writer forget some of the scenes which he has witnessed in the prosecution of his inquiries ; and although always

interested with the antique, yet never was he so alive to the subject of old age as now. The reader may occasionally present to his mind a scene, more adapted to the painter and the poet, than to the historian. A cottage rises to his view, whose humble, but clean furniture, and wholesome atmosphere, are the better for religion. A strong light shines through the glass casement, and falling in a stream upon the opposite wall, illuminates the whole room. The writer on a chair, or perhaps a three-legged stool, sits in the immediate neighbourhood of an old disciple of Christ, who is himself encircled with children, children's children, and great-grand-children, each listening to the tale of "olden times," and some of the most advanced in years, confirming and illustrating the tale, by observations of the disciple's own, which were made when recollection was in her prime. The venerable Christian, who forms the most remarkable figure of the joyous group, sits in his accustomed armed chair, and looks like some of the ancient ruined strengths and castles to be found in our land. Several parts of his mind appear laid waste and decayed, but there are other parts more durable, strong, and grand, from their rising just like fragments among the ruins of the rest. In other instances, as in the case of George Wainwright, of Dore, when seen upwards of a year and half ago by the author, the reader may image to himself an old man sitting among his descendants like a connecting link between the living and the dead; a being in whom the light of existence has been already partially obscured by the encroaching shadows of death; the smile of dotage playing at intervals on his shrivelled features; the motion of his light blue eyes distinguishing his visage from that of a corpse; and then, as if some wandering spirit had animated him into a temporary resurrection, and ready to catch at any touch of association with the living world, raising his head with a cheerful look, as if he had at once, and for the first time, acquired sense to comprehend the subject of discourse, and to feel the interest excited by the presence and inquiries of a stranger, such, for the moment, being the intense operation of his mental energy upon his physical powers

and nervous system, that, notwithstanding his infirmity of deafness, each word that is spoken falls as full and distinct upon his ear, as it could have done at a more early period of his life. He again appears with his usual air of apathy, and want of interest, and every now and then, feels with his hand for something which has been laid aside, and looks round as if surprised at missing it. But even these temporary glimpses, when the mind shines forth, like the lights of heaven from behind a cloud, are moments of interest, especially when his testimony confirms what has just been advanced before by a daughter of about three score years and ten.

When the writer had proceeded a considerable way with his work, Dr. Clarke published his letter in the Methodist Magazine for April, 1821. That the Doctor intended complying with the request of Conference, in writing a Life of Mr. WESLEY, was perfectly understood by the author; but that he had particularly requested the brethren to furnish him with materials, was unknown, as he was not at the Conference, till the appearance of the letter. "I proposed to the President of the Conference," says the Doctor, "that the preachers should be requested to collect all the authentic and original anecdotes of Mr. WESLEY, and of what is called original Methodism, in their power, and to confer with as many of our aged friends as possible, in their different circuits, for what they might be able to furnish on these heads. And I requested also, that this might be done with all speed, as this source of evidence must soon be dried up by the hand of death, which had already destroyed nearly the whole of those preachers and members who had been acquainted with the Founder of our Societies, or had witnessed the introduction of Methodism into the principal towns and cities in the kingdom, to which Mr. WESLEY's attention was first providentially directed, and where many singular interpositions of the Divine hand guided and marked his apostolic labours." On reading this, the writer immediately associated the Doctor's work with his own; and, in addition to his first objects, viz. those of rescuing many important facts from oblivion, and of furnishing an example to others, he formed the resolution of putting

the MS. into the hands of Dr. C., that he might furnish himself with whatever might be suitable for his purpose. The author communicated to the latter his design, his plan, and how far he had proceeded; on which he wrote an immediate answer, part of which is, "It does not appear to me that you could have pursued a more judicious and effective plan. It is by such means alone, that the perishing originals of Methodism can be recovered and preserved. The fact relative to the old man, was within a few days of being irrecoverably lost! With all my heart, I wish you had a *travelling commission* over the whole Connexion, that you might glean up, on your present plan, every thing recoverable."

The publication of this work may appear, at first sight, prejudicial to the Doctor's Life of Mr. WESLEY, as far as its influence extends. This is a prejudice which the author is not very anxious to correct, because the serious reflection of the reader is sufficient for the purpose. All the other places touched upon by Dr. C., where Methodism has been introduced and established, save Sheffield and its vicinity, will be lost to the person who only possesses this book, and not his intended Life. The present work is local in subject, and will be local in circulation; the other is the continent, and this is the field. But there are portions of this field highly interesting to the immediate proprietor, his heirs, and domestics, which would not at all comport with the design and work of the general historian. When the general historian of the Methodist body and its Founder has taken from a mere local history what may be adapted to his purpose, a mass of interesting information will be left, relative to the small societies around; the progress of the whole; the financial affairs of the circuit; the erection and enlargement of chapels; the preachers stationed at different times in the neighbourhood; the rise and progress of Methodist Sunday Schools; notices of characters remarkable for their piety and usefulness; revivals; persecutions; providences; and a hundred other things. The general historian could not think of burthening his work with many particulars highly interesting to the neighbourhood where they are observed

to have occurred: and hence have arisen the necessity and propriety of the history of separate counties, which form interesting appendages to the History of England. This is, in Methodism, as in a national point of view, a *desideratum*; but it is hoped the time will come, when each district, if not each circuit, shall have its separate history.

The work, however, should be commenced immediately. The present was within a short time of being lost. The old man, aged 107, was visited by the author, who was not aware that he was worse than usual, April 11, 1821, when he took his likeness, and added to his stock of information; four days after which, the venerable worthy entered the world of spirits. Old Mr. Woodhouse was visited, April 10, the day previous to the author's engagement with George Wainwright, who was then in his usual health and spirits: in the course of the month following, May 22, he also quitted this state of mortality. Thus, as though Providence had spared them to accomplish some of its purposes, they stepped forward, their testimony was obtained, and they immediately retired; disappeared from among men.

The names and images of the first Methodists identify themselves with the earliest remembrances of nearly the oldest living, and form part of their happiest associations. The few that now remain, are so many heir-looms handed down to us from antiquity. They are, in their connexion with Methodism, the living and almost sole remnant of our forefathers, of that hallowed generation of parents and instructors, who had given us religious existence, fostered the infancy of the second race now living, and sowed in their youthful minds the seeds of truth and piety. To the present members of Society, therefore, the offspring of the first Methodist ministry, the death of all the oldest standards, whenever it shall finally take place, will be as if the paternal roof had fallen in, and left our chambers desolate. To others than Methodists, the near and watchful observers of the body, it will be as if some towering rock, hoary with time and hardened by the tempest, some landmark

immemorial, had sunk into the earth, and changed the bearings of the whole visible horizon.

It was, as appears from the mottoes selected, both the Mosaic and Apostolic plan, to stir up the people's minds by way of remembrance, thus exciting their gratitude and inspiring them with confidence; and as the Holy Ghost has, in the Sacred Writings, pointed out the failings and perfections of the professors of religion, the author has been faithful in recording *apostacies* as well as *conversions*. It is the Christian's duty to treasure up in his memory, and to apply on proper occasions, every case, example, and singular combination of circumstances, that promise either increase of knowledge, or improvement of conduct. While he enlarges his own experience, he is careful to profit by that of others. He makes their information his own, by inquiry; and uses their faults, and the effects of them, as admonitions. He sets up their skill as a pattern, and observes their success as an incitement. He turns even his own misfortunes and defects to advantage; the former rouse him to greater caution, the latter quicken his diligence, and both increase his attention, stimulate his vigilance, and improve the direction of his conduct.

Should the vitiated taste of any connected with the body of people, part of whom are represented in the following history, so far prevail over them, as to excite a blush, when they look at Methodism in her homely russet garb, the author only has to say, that Methodism has cause to be ashamed of them. Their conduct, in such case, would be that of a rich citizen, disdaining to acknowledge his poor ancestors from the country, through whose honest industry and frugality he has actually been made what he is, in reference to wealth. Many of the first propagators of Christianity, under the Methodist name, were unquestionably rough tools, but they had rough work. They built the bridges over which their descendants walk in safety; they drained the lands which their followers now enjoy. As it regards others than the Methodists, the author was not immediately writing for them, and consequently has made it no part of his business to please them.

On the other hand, he has avoided intentionally giving offence, though he has not hesitated, when a debt of obligation stood in the way, to give to it the effect intended. But this, though not always the case, should rather excite emotions of gratitude, than painful feeling.

Where no direct reference is made to any work extant, the facts recorded have been well authenticated, by eye or ear witnesses, or the immediate descendants and connexions of the persons concerned, before they have been introduced. As the work is the *first* of the kind in Methodism, the author will consider himself amply repaid, if it only should have the tendency of directing the attention of his brethren to scenes and subjects still more interesting.

JAMES EVERETT.

SHEFFIELD, Mar. 9, 1822.

METHODISM IN SHEFFIELD,

&c. &c.

CHAPTER I.

An epitome of Mr. Wesley's early public Proceedings—David Taylor's arrival in Sheffield; his first reception and efforts; begins to itinerate; is rendered useful to John Bennet and others; connects himself with Mr. Ingham—John Nelson—The first Preaching-house in Sheffield.

To persons not conversant with the religious Society, of which the present work professes to give an account, it may be necessary to advert to the personal history of the founder.

1703. The Rev. JOHN WESLEY, second son of the Rev. SAMUEL WESLEY, rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, was born June 17, O. S., 1703. In the year 1720, he entered a student in Christ Church College, Oxford, and soon after took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. September 19, 1725, he was ordained a deacon by Dr. Potter, at that time bishop of Oxford. Shortly after, he preached his first sermon at South Leigh, within two miles of Witney, in Oxfordshire. He was elected, March 17, 1726, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. November 7, 1726, he was chosen Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the Public Disputations in the Classics. On February 14, 1727, he took his degree of Master of Arts; and on September 22nd, 1728, he was, by the same bishop, ordained priest.*

1729. It appears from the accounts given of Mr. Charles Wesley, that for more than two years before the

* Myles's Chronol. Hist. of Method., p. 2: [see also the different Lives of Mr. WESLEY: . . .]

Society in Oxford began to assume any thing like a regular form, he had studied very hard, and through his brother's advice and influence had become deeply serious; that during the summer of 1728, he had received the sacrament weekly, and had prevailed on two or three young men to do the same; and that these gentlemen had occasionally met together for the purpose of assisting and encouraging each other in their duty, and of regulating their employments by certain rules. The systematic mode of arranging their studies and other pursuits procured them the distinguishing epithet of **METHODISTS**, which, according to Mr. Charles, was given them before his brother came to Oxford, in November 1729. This is probably the most accurate account; for when Mr. WESLEY speaks of this appellation, he mentions it only in very general terms, without attempting to state at what period of the Society it was first given. The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies, says he, occasioned a young gentleman of Christ Church to observe, "Here is a new set of *Methodists* sprung up," alluding to some antient physicians that were so called, who flourished about thirty or forty years before the Christian era, and of whom Themison, spoken of by Juvenal, was the founder. The name was new and quaint, so it immediately took, and the Methodists were known all over the University.

1729—1733. Though these gentlemen were distinguished by this epithet, it does not appear that they met together at any fixed or stated periods, or that they had made any regulations for the purpose before Mr. JOHN WESLEY joined them. When he associated with them, they gladly committed the direction of the whole to him; from which time the Society commenced, composed of four persons—Messrs. JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY, Richard Morgan, and — Kirkman. In 1733, they were joined by Mr. Benjamin Ingham, and Mr. Broughton; and also in April, the same year, by Mr. Clayton, and two or three of his pupils; nearly at the same time Mr. James Hervey, pupil to Mr. JOHN WESLEY, joined them; and shortly after, Mr. George Whitfield. These gentlemen were all collegians, and are to be considered as the *first Methodists*.

1735—1738. In the year 1735, Mr. WESLEY, for the first time, preached extempore, in All-hallows church, Lombard-street, London; but it was not till the year 1737, that he saw, that “Holiness comes by faith, and that men are justified before they are sanctified.” Animated with zeal for the honour of God and the good of souls, he set sail for Georgia in 1735; and, after having formed a small society, undergone many dangers and hardships, and been more fully instructed, by means of the Moravians, in the grand scheme of salvation, he returned to England, where he arrived in Feb. 1738. In the course of the same year, he and some Moravians formed themselves into a society, which met in Fetter-lane, London. Hitherto he had only preached in the churches; and so extremely tenacious was he in every thing relative to order, and to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church, that he, according to his own statement, “should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church.” Insisting strenuously, however, on the new doctrine (as it was then called) of salvation by faith, many, especially among the higher orders of society, were offended, and he was soon told at most of the established places of worship, “Sir, you must preach here no more.” This led the way to the erection of buildings separate from the Establishment; crowded congregations led to field-preaching; and love to souls produced itinerancy. It was not till April 2nd, 1739, that Mr. WESLEY did, in Bristol, what he had often done in a warmer climate, preached in the open air. We now behold him, like the child, who unintentionally has put in motion some powerful piece of machinery, and sees the wheels revolving, the chains clashing, cylinders rolling round him, while he himself is equally astonished at the tremendous powers which his single agency has called into action, and almost dreads the consequences which he is compelled to await, without the possibility of averting them. The clergy abandon him—persecution flames—crowds press around him for the bread of life—and God, who insensibly led him to put his hand to the work, directs the engine in its movements.

1738. While the Supreme Disposer of events was pleased to employ Mr. WESLEY in the south of the kingdom, he was engaging others in his service in the interior, to prepare the way for a fuller display of the gospel of Christ. This was particularly the case in Sheffield and its vicinity, through the instrumentality of a person of the name of David Taylor, who, when he commenced his career, had no connexion with Mr. WESLEY, and probably had not even heard of him.

David Taylor is characterised by Mr. Wm. Bennet, in the Memoir which he has written of his mother, (p. 20,) as "an itinerant preacher out of Leicestershire." Mr. Samuel Birks, of Thorp, now living, (April, 1821,) became acquainted with David Taylor in 1738, and furnished the writer, in conversation, with the following particulars:—David, he observed, had lived in the family of Lady Betty Hastings, as butler. The circumstance which first disposed him to direct his attention to personal religion, was the absence of the domestic chaplain from evening prayers. After the family had waited some time without the appearance of their spiritual guide, it was demanded by some one, "Who shall read prayers?" The reply given, was, "David Taylor." Silence, for a short space, pervaded the assembly. "Who," it was again demanded, "shall read prayers?" The same reply was reiterated from different quarters, "David Taylor." Why he was selected by general consent, it is impossible at this period to determine, but the probability is, the good opinion entertained of his general character. He took his stand, though not without considerable hesitancy and diffidence, in the desk usually assigned to the clergyman; and the very idea of assuming, though only for an occasion, so sacred an office, produced the most serious impressions upon his mind. On leaving the service of Lady Betty, he went to reside in the family of Mr. Wardlow, of Fulwood, but whether as a servant or friend, is now unknown; probably in the latter character, as he was not altogether dependant upon servitude for subsistence, having saved a little property, and from the circumstance of his frequent travels from place to place, during the week, as well as on the Lord's day, an employment seldom to be

met with in a person whose service is required at home. He soon began to pray, and give a word of exhortation, in private houses, which better accorded with the views of Mr. Wardlow, as a dissenter, than if he had dwelt in the residence of a member of the Establishment. People assembled around him in little groups, the tidings were borne to others, and public attention was attracted. One of the principal places of his early labours was Heeley, about a mile south of Sheffield, where a few serious people associated with him, who were afterwards denominated Methodists, and who may be considered as constituting the first Society belonging to the body in these parts.

Lydia Staniforth, a person who will be noticed in a future page, took great delight in relating to her children and others, from whom the writer had the circumstance, together with other particulars of early Methodism, a dream of Mrs. James Bennet's, mother of Mr. Edward Bennet. Mrs. Bennet told her that she dreamt she saw a man, describing his age, his complexion, the colour of his hair, his size, his dress, &c. who entered her house, announcing himself a preacher of the gospel. The very next day David Taylor made his appearance, exactly answering the description of her visionary visitor, and accosting her in his words. This was when David first came from Leicestershire, and very likely prior to his going to Mr. Wardlow's; and this alone secured for him a favourable reception at Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's, who stood his firm friends. Of dreams, in general, but little can be said; they are more intended for particular benefit, than for general belief, in their utility; in particular cases, however, it would neither be safe nor scriptural to reject them. In the present instance, some attention is due. Mrs. Bennet's piety preserves her from the suspicion of falsehood, and it would be acceding too much to infidelity, to suppose that Elihu was incorrect, when he said, "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed, then He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction."*

* Job, xxxiii. 14—16; see also Joel, ii. 28, 29.

1738. The parents of Mr. Birks being on a visit to some relations at Heeley, received an account of those private meetings, heard David Taylor for themselves, and were so impressed in his favour, that they gave him an invitation to Thorp, about six miles north of Sheffield. On their return home, having previously fixed the day, they sent Samuel, the present Mr. Birks, who was then twelve years of age, to Heeley, with a horse for the preacher, while he himself rode on a poney. When he arrived on Sheffield-moor, he was at a loss to know where to go, being an entire stranger. It was not long, however, before the choral swell of voices, from one of the cottages, announced to him, that the inmates were engaged in the solemn exercises of devotion. "The sound," said the old gentleman, when relating the circumstance, his eyes sparkling, and his countenance brightening at the recollection of early impressions, "the sound was the most angelic I ever recollect to have heard." This may receive a solution in our own experience. The sound of several voices united by distance into one harmony, and freed from those harsh discordances which jar the ear when heard more near, is calculated to affect the coldest heart with a sense of sublimity. Charmed with the notes which poured upon his ear, and as much with a view of personal gratification as to inquire after the object of his mission, he rode up to the door; but how much was he surprised and delighted to find the very person of whom he was in quest, associated with a few pious people hymning their Maker's praise. David shortly mounted the horse, led on by his juvenile guide, and thus commenced *itinerant preacher* on a more extended scale than he was originally led to contemplate. The people in the village and neighbourhood were apprized of the object of his visit, and every preparation was made in the *barn* for their reception and accommodation. He sung, prayed, and preached, at the time appointed; and thus, probably, consecrated the very *first barn*, that is, in its connexion with Methodism, as a temple for the public worship of God. It was not long before several young men were brought under serious impressions, and held meetings in Thorp for singing and prayer; exhortation succeeded; and a

marked distinction being observed between the promoters of these meetings and the other inhabitants of the neighbourhood, something like a Society began to make its appearance,—a Society, religious in its views and feelings, and separate from the world in its practice and associations.

1739. Though Methodism in these parts, and at this period, was unknown in name, yet he who afterwards was distinguished as its founder, was not unknown as a preacher; and Mr. Samuel Birks, whose portrait accompanies this work, and whose personal history runs through the whole History of Methodism, is perhaps the only man alive who recollects having heard Mr. WESLEY preach prior to his leaving college. Mr. WESLEY was on a visit to Wentworth House, in 1733, with his father, who was then engaged with some literary work, and found it necessary to consult the library of the Marquis of Rockingham. Their stay being prolonged over the Sabbath-day, Mr. WESLEY occupied the pulpit in Wentworth church, to the no small gratification of the parishioners. What tended to excite more than usual attention was, that the preacher was a stranger, the son of a venerable clergyman of the Establishment, and had his father as a hearer. Mr. Birks was then about eight years of age, and went to church with his father, in company with a neighbour of the name of Mr. John Duke.* The latter, on their return from public worship, was pleased to pass an encomium on the preacher, and noticed, as Mr. Birks distinctly recollects, an appropriate quotation, in the course of the sermon, from the works of Archbishop Usher. This early recollection was afterwards cherished by the public part which Mr. WESLEY acted.

Foreign as were the movements of David Taylor to the general usage of the times, yet he was not without his patrons, two of the most powerful of whom were, Mr. Wardlow already mentioned, and Mr. James Bennet, of Sheffield, husband of the good woman noticed in a preceding page. In addition to the countenance of

* Grandfather of Mr. J. Duke, a local preacher in the Rotherham Circuit.

these, which, at that period, was of importance, he was encouraged by the example of Mr. Benjamin Ingham, one of the six pious students expelled from the University, who began to preach out of doors, and in different private houses in the neighbourhood. Mr. Ingham afterwards joined the Moravians, and is repeatedly noticed by John Nelson*; not unfrequently as hostile to Methodism, and declaring to his hearers, that Mr. WESLEY "preached false doctrine, and it was not safe to hear him." With him, as yet, David Taylor seems to have had no immediate connexion.

Of the fruit of David Taylor's ministry, that of the conversion of Mr. John Bennet is the most distinguished, not only in its character, but in its consequences. It appears from a memoir of Grace, (p. 20,) the wife of Mr. John Bennet, written by their son, and published in 1803, that this early companion of David Taylor's was at first intended by his parents for one of the learned professions, and with that view, as is stated in his MS. Journal, received a good classical education. Being rather of a serious disposition, and partial to books, he made choice of Divinity, and about the age of seventeen was placed under the care of Dr. Latham, of Findern, near Derby, for the purpose of going through a course of academical studies. He remained there, however, but a short time; and having relinquished all thoughts of the Christian ministry, engaged himself as a justice's clerk to R. Bagshawe, Esq., Sheffield, in which situation he continued till he was twenty-two years of age. After this he embarked in a commercial line of business, which was both a mortification and grief to his parents. Whatever might be the native seriousness of his disposition, according to the short sketch given us by his son, he was evidently taking some rapid strides toward a dissolute course of life. It appears from Mr. Birks, that at the time he was invited to hear David Taylor, he had a horse to run on Sheffield race-course. He was then in the twenty-fifth year of his age, and forming schemes of happiness, by which he

* Journal, pp. 44, 45, 46, 51, 53, 55, 56, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74; the edition of 1801.

would not, if even realized, have attained that object; but it pleased God to put a damp upon his mirth by blessing the word to his soul,—a display of mercy the more remarkable, as he went rather to ridicule the speaker, than to reap advantage. Struck with David's earnestness and zeal, he invited him into that part of Derbyshire called the High Peak, and travelled with him from place to place, though he thereby incurred the displeasure of his parents. Soon after this he became acquainted with Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Abberford, in this county, whom he likewise introduced into Derbyshire, and accompanied him as long as he continued preaching in those parts. He was thus the first instrument of conveying what was afterwards called Methodism, into Derbyshire and the adjoining counties; and when the Divine Being graciously revealed his Son in his heart, and visited him with a sense of his pardoning love, he immediately relinquished all secular pursuits, and devoted himself indefatigably to the work of the ministry.*

Not at all inconsistent with the account in the preceding paragraph, is one given by Mr. Daniel Jackson, now a supernumerary preacher. "I was informed, says he, "by Moses Dale, an old local preacher, in Cheshire, that Mr. John Bennet, of Chinley, then a man of pleasure, went to run a race mare at or near Sheffield, where he heard David Taylor preach on salvation by grace through faith. Mr. Bennet believed the report, sold his mare, brought the preacher into the Peak, and afterwards became himself an active, useful preacher of the gospel; so that before circuits were regularly formed, the Peak of Derbyshire, with the adjoining parts of Cheshire and Lancashire, were called *John Bennet's round*; and in the first Methodist Conference, which was held in 1744, and composed of six clergymen and four lay-preachers, Mr. Bennet was one of the latter."†

Further than that of warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come, David Taylor seems not to have proceeded. It never once entered into his design to organize a society, and so preserve those who received

* Memoirs of Grace Bennet, p. 20. † Meth. Mag. for 1817, p. 683.

good impressions under his ministry ; hence, while they were exposed to the world, he himself was open to become the member of the first party that might appear, bearing the smallest affinity to his own views and feelings. The result was as might be expected ; and it is thus left on record by Mr. WESLEY :—“ He occasionally exhorted multitudes of people in various parts. But after that, he had taken no thought about them. So that the greater part fell asleep again.”* This testimony of Mr. WESLEY’s is the result of personal inquiry when he visited Sheffield in 1742.

Among the few who were religiously impressed in the town of Sheffield, and whose impressions were permanent, were the mother and an aunt of Mrs. Green, of Rotherham. The former, it appears from a MS. diary of her own, put into my hands by her granddaughters Mrs. Bagshaw and Mrs. Chambers, of Rotherham, was filled with deep sorrow and hearty contrition for past sin, “ the remembrance of which was grievous to her,” in September, 1734. On receiving the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, August, 1739, at which period she had begun to associate with the hearers of David Taylor, she expresses it as an imperious duty to record the mercy of God in giving her a “ clear and lively hope of his mercy in Christ Jesus.” After passing through some painful exercises, in 1740, she praises God for graciously supporting her : and from 1741 to 1751 takes occasion to insert instances both of providence and grace, as exercised towards her. She was twice married ; and her daughter by her first husband, who afterwards became such a burning and shining light, was now under conviction.

1740. Ere this period, Mr. Benjamin Ingham had acquired considerable influence, and to him both David Taylor and John Bennet had attached themselves, and were now considered members of his society. Mr. Ingham writes thus from Ossett, near Wakefield :—“ In Yorkshire, the Lord still keeps carrying on his work. Many souls are truly awakened ; some have obtained mercy. The enemies are engaged against us, but the

Lord is our helper. We have no differences, no divisions, no disputings."* Though this was the year in which Mr. WESLEY finally separated from the Moravians†, it should seem that the unhappy janglings which agitated these parts, and which so often called forth the animadversions and rebukes of John Nelson, had not then commenced. A prejudice, however, was soon conceived against Mr. WESLEY, though hitherto only grounded on report, which was considerably increased on the return of John Nelson from London to his native place.

He reached Birstal, says Mr. WESLEY, "about Christmas in the year 1740. His relations and acquaintance soon began to inquire, what he thought of the new faith, (which had, by means of Mr. Ingham, occasioned much noise in Yorkshire,) and whether he believed, there was any such thing as a man's knowing that his sins were forgiven? John told them point blank, that 'this new faith, as they called it, was the old faith of the gospel; and that he himself was as sure his sins were forgiven, as he could be of the shining of the sun.' This was soon noised abroad: more and more came to inquire, concerning these strange things. Some put him upon the proof of the great truths, which such inquiries naturally led him to mention. And, thus, he was brought unawares to quote, explain, compare, and enforce several parts of Scripture. This he did at first, sitting in his house, until the company increased, so that the house could not contain them. Then he stood at the door, which he was commonly obliged to do, in the evening, as soon as he came from work. God immediately set his seal to what was spoken: and several believed, and therefore declared, that God was merciful also to their unrighteousness, and had forgiven all their sins. Mr. Ingham hearing of this, came to Birstal, inquired into the facts, talked with John himself, and examined him in the closest manner, both touching his knowledge and spiritual experience. After which he encouraged him to proceed, and pressed him, as often as he had opportunity, to come to any of the places

* Meth. Mag. 1778. p. 183.

† Journals, vol. ii. p. 46, 8vo. ed.

where he himself had been, and speak to the people, as God should enable him. But he soon gave offence, both by his plainness of speech, and advising people to go to church and sacrament. Mr. Ingham reproved him; but finding him incorrigible, forbade any that were in his societies to hear him. But being persuaded this is the will of God concerning him, he continues to this hour (1742) working in the day, that he may be burthensome to no man, and in the evening *testifying the truth as it is in Jesus.*"*

David Taylor, who must now be identified with Mr. Ingham's party, paid a visit to Birstal, leaving, in all probability, the serious people who had been accustomed to hear him in this neighbourhood without an instructor. Of this visit, John Nelson speaks in the following terms:—"A few days after I got home, David Taylor came to preach in our town, in Mr. Ingham's society, when I went to hear him: and a dry morsel his sermon was. Several that were acquainted with him (from whence it may be inferred that it was not his first visit,) followed me, and wanted to know how I liked the discourse. I was backward to tell them, but they pressed hard on me, and said, 'Do you not think he is as good a preacher as Mr. WESLEY?' I said, 'There is no comparison between his preaching and Mr. WESLEY'S: he has not staid long enough in the large room at Jerusalem.' After they had been gone some time, they came again to ask what I meant? I said, 'He is not endued with power from on high.' They went and related to him what I said; and he told me since, that if I had been present, he could have stabbed me; yet he could not rest till he went to hear Mr. WESLEY at London. Then he found what I said was true; and he came down to Sheffield, and into Derbyshire, preaching, what he called, Mr. WESLEY'S doctrine, and awakened and converted many scores of people, till the Germans got to him and made him deny the law of God: then he became again as salt without savour."† From this, it should seem, that David had not, till some

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 149.

† Ibid. p. 45, 46.

time after this period, possessed the proper spirit of the gospel, and had been but partially useful.

1741. On his return from London, he directed his attention to the first scene of his labours. His preaching attracted public notice; and it is not improbable, that this is the circumstance referred to by Mr. Hunter, where he says, "The Wesleyan Methodists were first received into Sheffield in the year 1741, by Mr. Edward Bennet, a sugar-baker. He built for them a chapel in Pinstone-lane, which was demolished in a riot on the 25th of May, 1743."* This chapel was not immediately in Pinstone-lane, but in that part of Cheney-square bordering upon it. The erection of the building confirms the truth of John Nelson's remark relative to the success of David's preaching, the crowds who heard and profited rendering such erection necessary.

* History of Sheffield and Hallamshire, p. 171.

CHAP. II.

John Nelson's first visit to Sheffield—The village of Thorp—William Green becomes serious—An extraordinary account of the conversion of John Thorpe—David Taylor visits Derbyshire; is benighted on the Moors; his success in the Peak—William and Alice Brammah, and others of the first members of the Society in Sheffield—Mr. Wesley's first visit to Sheffield, and interview with David Taylor—An out-pouring of the Spirit at Barley-Hall—Conviction for sin mistaken for insanity—David Taylor declines in zeal—John Bennet's increasing usefulness—The conversion of Miss Holmes.

1741. WHILE David Taylor was labouring with all his might, under the name of a Methodist, John Nelson came into the neighbourhood to assist him. So early as this, Mr. Birks recollects hearing the latter preach in his father's house at Thorp. Before he placed his second foot within the door-way, he pronounced his usual salutation, “Peace be to this house, and all that dwell herein.” Among the first who became decidedly serious at Thorp, was Mr. Wm. Green, who afterwards went to Sheffield, and finally settled at Rotherham. As frequent reference will be made to him in subsequent parts of the history, a brief notice shall here suffice. He was born at Pibley-lane, near Mansfield, when his mother was on a visit to that place, 1717. His youthful days were spent at Tankersley, near Thorncliffe. He taught a school in Thorp, became a useful leader and local preacher, and was the husband of that saint of God, Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, who was cousin to Mr. Holmes, of Sike House, a favorite resort of Mr. WESLEY'S. Mrs. Booth, of Brushes, too, a good woman, mother of Mr. Booth, whose burial and tomb, near the mansion, reflects so little honour on his Christianity, was one of David Taylor's constant hearers at Thorp. Her husband sometimes accompanied her, and was not without occasional serious impressions. Another

person who attended preaching there about this period was, the father of the present Rev. Wm. Thorpe, of Bristol, who may be considered as springing from a Methodist stock, and who himself, it is said, met in class some time in Rotherham. Mr. Birks observed to the writer, that John Thorpe was then a young man, and in the capacity of a journeyman shoemaker to the clerk of Wentworth Church; that he frequently attended preaching at his father's house, in company with other young men, to sport with religion and the preacher; and that his first serious impressions were received at Thorp. The case of his conversion, as detailed, under the title of "Anecdotes of the Rev. John Thorpe, of Masbrough, near Rotherham, Yorkshire," by an anonymous writer, in the Methodist Magazine*, is strikingly singular.

"The town of Rotherham," it is remarked, "and its environs, had, for a considerable time, been ranked by serious people, among those parts in Yorkshire, which were least inclined to favour the spread of evangelical religion; and when Messrs. WHITFIELD and WESLEY, and others, attempted to disseminate Divine knowledge in that neighbourhood, their persons and message were treated in general with the greatest contempt. The propagation of malicious falsehoods was encouraged, with design to counteract the good effects of their ministry. Mr. Thorpe ranged under the standard of their most virulent opposers; and not content with personal insult, added private ridicule to public interruption. Ale-houses became theatres, where the fate of religious opinion was to be determined.

"It was at one of these convivial resorts, that Mr. Thorpe and three of his associates, to enliven the company, undertook to mimic the Methodist preachers. The proposition was highly gratifying to all the parties present, and a wager agreed upon, to inspire each individual with a desire of excelling in this impious attempt. That their jovial auditors might adjudge the prize to the most adroit performer, it was concluded that each

* See year 1794, pp. 311, 312, 313.

should open the Bible, and hold forth from the first text that should present itself to the eye. Accordingly three in their turn mounted the table, and entertained their wicked companions at the expense of every thing sacred. When they had exhausted their little stock of buffoonery, it devolved on Mr. Thorpe to close this very irreverent scene. Much elated, and confident of success, he exclaimed as he ascended the table, 'I shall beat you all !'

" When the Bible was handed to him, he had not the slightest preconception of what part of Scripture he should make the subject of his banter. However, by the guidance of Providence, it opened at that remarkable passage, Luke xiii. 3, ' Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' No sooner had he uttered the words, than his mind was affected in a very extraordinary manner. The sharpest pangs of conviction now seized him, and conscience denounced tremendous vengeance upon his soul. In a moment, he had a clear view of his subject, and divided his discourse more like a divine, who had been accustomed to speak on portions of Scripture, than one who never so much as thought on religious topics, except for the purpose of ridicule ! He found no deficiency of matter, nor want of utterance, and he has often declared, ' If ever I preached in my life, by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time.' The impression that the subject made upon his own mind, had such an effect upon his manner, that the most ignorant and profane could not but perceive that what he had spoken was with the greatest sincerity.

" The unexpected solemnity and pertinency of his address, instead of entertaining the company, first spread a visible depression, and afterwards a sudden gloom, upon every countenance. The sudden change in the complexion of his associates did not a little conduce to increase the convictions of his own bosom. No individual appeared disposed to interrupt him; but, on the contrary, their attention was deeply engaged with the pointedness of his remarks; yea, many of his sentences, made, to his own apprehension, his hair stand erect !

" When he left the table, not a syllable was uttered concerning the wager, but a profound silence pervaded the company. Mr. Thorpe immediately withdrew,

without taking the least notice of any one present, and returned home with very painful reflections, and in the deepest distress. Happily for him, this was the last bacchanalian revel: his impressions were manifestly genuine; and from that period, the connexion between him and his former companions was entirely dissolved. Thus, by Divine grace, 'the prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive was delivered!' The people whom he had before so frequently reviled, became now the objects of his delight. He sought their company with avidity; and, soon after, was joined to Mr. WESLEY's society. He continued more than two years in a disconsolate and desponding state; but that God who comforteth those that are cast down, was pleased, after he had showed him great and sore troubles, to take off his sackcloth, and gird him with gladness. His habitual seriousness and uniform morality soon endeared him to his new connexions, and he was appointed by Mr. WESLEY to preach the faith he once attempted to destroy. His abilities were generally considered to be above mediocrity; and in his itinerant labours he was both acceptable and successful wherever he went.

"When Mr. Thorpe had preached above two years, he was uncommonly harassed with temptations to atheism. These continued, a few intervals excepted, many months. His distress sometimes upon this account was so great as to embarrass his mind beyond description. At length, however, he was happily delivered by the following occurrence. Passing through a wood, with a design to preach in a neighbouring village, while he was swinging his hand, a leaf accidentally stuck between his fingers. He instantly felt a powerful impression on his mind to examine the texture of the leaf. Holding it between his eye and the sun, and reflecting upon its exquisitely curious and wonderful formation, he was led into an extensive contemplation on the works of creation. Tracing these back to their first cause, he had in a moment such a conviction of the existence and ineffable perfections of God, which then appeared in every spire of grass, that his distress was immediately removed, and he prosecuted his journey, rejoicing in

God, and admiring him in every object that presented itself to his view."

The substance of this account is noticed also by Mr. Southey, in his Life of Mr. WESLEY, vol. ii. p. 85; but in no one of the relations published, is the date of the event recorded. It is placed here, because of its immediate connexion with Thorpe at the time, as a hearer of the Methodist preachers. Instead of coming from Wentworth to Thorp, to make merry with sacred things, he regularly attended for profit to his soul, and soon began to assist in the prayer meetings. That he began to preach at a very early period appears also evident, for Mr. T. Scales, who was born in 1733, heard him preach in 1745, at which period he was a regular local preacher, and was accustomed to go from Rotherham to Cudworth, a place north of Barnsley, to preach. To young Scales he was rendered useful.*

As active agents increased, the work of God, now generally designated by the name of Methodism, extended. David Taylor, whose ministry had been so successful in Sheffield, began to think of the people in Derbyshire, to whom he had preached when he was less zealously affected in the cause in which he was engaged. In one of his excursions over the moors, he was benighted a few miles beyond Bradfield Dale. Part of the old house is yet standing, on the edge of the moors, to which he was first directed by a glimmering light from the fire within. He solicited admission, which was no sooner gained, than he began to talk to them respecting their souls, the aggravating nature of moral evil, and the final doom of the wicked. The people, unaccustomed to think on such subjects, and his zeal, so perfectly novel in those times, probably making no very favourable impression upon their minds relative to his sanity, requested him to leave the house. Like the Gadarenes, who prayed Jesus to depart out of their coasts, 'they were afraid.' To hasten the departure of their unwelcome guest, the cottagers told David, that they had no convenience for him; and the more effectually to secure it, one of them slipped off to Woodseats,

* Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 126.

a farm-house, to procure lodgings. Having succeeded in this, David was soon comfortably seated beneath a more hospitable roof. He informed the inmates who he was, and told them that if they would invite their neighbours, and grant him permission, he would preach to them in the morning, which was accordingly done.

It was, in all probability, on one of those journeys across the wilds, that Mrs. Amy Taylor, of Banmoor, Peak Forest, grandmother of the late Mrs. Thomas Pindar, 'discovered the value of her soul, the danger to which sin exposed it, and the way of salvation through faith ;' for it was under David's ministry that she was brought to God.* This place, Banmoor, is a solitary farm, remote from any village or public road, two miles from Chapel-en-le-Frith. It was important in the early days of Methodism, being the mother-church of several large and flourishing societies in the neighbouring towns and villages. Of this number were Eyam, Stony-Middleton, Castleton, Grindleford-Bridge, and several other places†, all of which will, in the course of the work, receive every attention that authentic information will warrant.

Bongs, in the parish of Mellor, was another of those places in the Peak of Derbyshire, which may dispute the precedence with Banmoor, in the reception of the gospel from David Taylor. Under a sermon preached by David, Mr. Turner, of Bongs, and two of his daughters, were convinced of their moral depravity and actual rebellion against God. The father soon found peace, and appears to have been a man of fervent zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of man. This induced him to open his doors to the messengers of grace, at a time when both life and property were in danger through the violence of persecution. On one occasion, during these persecutions of the friends and ministers of Christ, he, having heard that John Nelson was impressed for the sake of Christ and his gospel, rode from Bongs, near Stockport, to York, to see him, converse with him, and encourage him ; and, as long as he lived, he continued the preaching in his own house, counting it an honour

* Meth. Mag. 1807, p. 363.

† Ibid, 1816, p. 161, 162.

to receive the preachers under his friendly roof. His daughter Ann, who was born in 1725, and was only about fifteen years of age when the same sermon proved beneficial to three of the family, walked in uprightness of heart and life before God seventy-six years, and, like a shock of corn fully ripe for the heavenly garner, entered into rest, 1816, in the 91st or 92nd year of her age.*

A proper place being appropriated to the public worship of God in Sheffield, and stated periods for Divine service established, the people who embraced Methodism were in less danger of being scattered during the absence of David Taylor than formerly, while their frequent attendance upon the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Dodge, curate of Ecclesall Chapel, was the means of preserving the life of God in their souls. He was a truly pious character, and frequently wept over his auditors while enforcing the great truths of the gospel. His fidelity in the discharge of his duties as a Christian minister, and the visible attachment which he manifested to the Methodists, procured him many enemies both in Sheffield, where he occasionally preached, and in the neighbourhood, among the less devout members of the Establishment. In addition to the countenance which he gave to them, there was in the primitive Methodists a strong predilection in favour of the Church of England, which was cherished by Mr. WESLEY and his co-adjutors in the work, and which rendered it no way difficult for them to attend its service. Taste and discrimination accompanied their conversion to God: they had been taught to distinguish between the chaff and the wheat, and were almost led, by the instinctive suggestions of their new nature, to go to those places where they could obtain suitable food for their hungry souls. Hence several were in the habit of going from Sheffield to Ecclesall to hear Mr. Dodge. Among the foremost and most constant of these, were William and Alice Brammah, two characters extensively known in Methodism. Old Mr. Woodhouse, of Hallam, another of the persons whose portrait accompanies this volume, and one of the living records consulted on the subject of ori-

* Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 683, 684, 685, 686, 687.

ginal Methodism, as here represented, had a perfect recollection, though he knew nothing of experimental religion at the time, and was but a boy about fourteen years of age, of this good man and his wife being the sport of the rude whenever they visited Ecclesall Chapel, and of evincing something in their deportment differing from others in point of sanctity. “Here are the Methodists coming!” was the general shout of the profligate on seeing them, who watched their approach.

What secured David Taylor more than an usual share of popularity was, his preaching sometimes out of doors. Sheffield-moor was his usual place of resort on these occasions. It was there that Lydia Staniforth, one of the first members of the Society, heard him. His discourse was a kind of exposition of the Lord’s Prayer. She was partially enlightened through his instrumentality; and her light and convictions were increased by the perusal of a short treatise on the “New Birth.” Her husband, to whom she unbosomed her mind, concluded that, in their case, it was perfectly unnecessary, as they attended church, and lived creditably in the eyes of the world. “Besides,” said he, “if we are not right, what will become of numbers more?” This was every way satisfactory to Luke, (for that was his Christian name,) till, attracted by the singing, he was led to hear for himself, got converted to God, and became, with his good wife, a credit and support to the Methodist Society.

Though Mr. James Bennet was kind in his attentions to David Taylor, it does not appear that the other preachers who visited Sheffield, were regularly entertained by him. So early as before the erection of the preaching-house, they were kindly lodged by Mr. Henry Smith, who was one of the first Methodists, father of Mr. Samuel Smith, who afterwards became an itinerant preacher, and grandfather of the present Mr. Henry Smith, Philadelphia, near the Infirmary. Old Henry Smith was a man of God.

1742. Mr. WESLEY, whose way was well prepared in these parts, visited Sheffield June 14, 1742, which is the first notice of the town and neighbourhood in his Journals. “Having,” says he, “a great desire to see David Taylor, whom God had made an instrument of

good to many souls, I rode to Sheffield ; but not finding him there, I was minded to go forward immediately. However, the importunity of the people constrained me to stay, and preach both in the evening and in the morning. Tuesday, the 15th, he came.”* Then follows what has been already remarked ; David’s neglect of the people in not attending to them after they were awakened. Mr. WESLEY preached in the evening on the inward kingdom of God ; and in the morning, Wednesday, the 16th, on the spirit of fear and the spirit of adoption. “It was now first,” he observes, “I felt that God was here also.”

He rode to Barley Hall, about six miles from hence, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Thorp, where he preached in the afternoon. There he was received as an angel of the Lord by Mr. Johnson’s pious family, some of whom were the first-fruits of Methodist zeal, and experienced a deeper sense of the presence of God than even at Sheffield. Many, while he was preaching, were melted down and filled with love toward Him whom “God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.” “I talked with one here,” says he, “who for about six months (from the hour she knew the pardoning love of God) has been all peace and love. She rejoices evermore, and prays without ceasing. God gives her whatever petitions she asks of Him, and enables her in every thing to give thanks. She has the witness in herself, that whatever she does, it is all done to the glory of God. Her heart never wanders from Him ; no, not for a moment, but is continually before the Throne ; yet whether she was sanctified throughout or not, I had not light to determine.”†

Incessant in his pulpit and other exertions, he preached at five o’clock the next morning, on the righteousness of faith. But he had not half finished his discourse, when he was constrained to break off from preaching ; his own and the hearts of the people were so filled with a sense of the love of God, and their mouths with prayer and thanksgiving. “When,” says he, “we were somewhat satisfied herewith, I went on to call sinners to the

* Vol. ii. p. 158. 8vo. edit. connected with his works. + This, I have been informed, was Mrs. Johnson’s daughter.



BARLEY HALL, NEAR THORP.



salvation ready to be revealed. The same blessing from God was found in the evening while I was shewing how He justifies the ungodly. Among the hearers was one, who, some time previous to this, had been deeply convinced of her ungodliness, insomuch that she cried out, day and night, ‘Lord, save, or I perish.’ All the neighbours agreeing that she was deranged, her husband put her under the care of a physician, who bled her largely, gave her a powerful emetic, and laid on several blisters. But all this proving unsuccessful, she was in a short time pronounced incurable. He thought, however, he would speak to one person more, who had done much good in the neighbourhood. When Mrs. Johnson visited her, she soon discovered the nature of her complaint, having herself experienced the same. She ordered all the medicines to be thrown away, and exhorted the patient to *look unto Jesus*, which she was enabled to do by faith, during the evening service. Thus was the broken in heart healed.” Mr. WESLEY left Barley Hall on the Friday, passed through Sheffield, and prosecuted the remainder of his journey.*

Prior to this visit of Mr. WESLEY’s, David Taylor had been flagging in his zeal, through the influence of Mr. Ingham’s opinions: but Mr. W. says, “When I talked with him at Sheffield, he was thoroughly sensible of his mistake.”† The flame of love which was kindled in his bosom in London, only burnt about twelve months; and although the dying embers were again re-animated, it was only a flickering blaze which served a still shorter time, and then expired; for he was again drawn into *German stillness* by Mr. Simpson, a person in connexion with Mr. Ingham.‡

It was during this journey, that John Bennet, who was still connected with the Moravians, under Mr. Ingham, first heard Mr. WESLEY preach at Dewsbury; and was introduced into his company by John Nelson, at Mirfield, in that neighbourhood.|| An intimacy between John Bennet and John Nelson had taken place,

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 158, 159. † Ibid. p. 226. ‡ Ibid. || Memoir of Grace Bennet, p. 21.

which was here increased; and such an auxiliary was the more opportune and important, in consequence of David Taylor's growing apathy. David, however, continued to itinerate, and occasionally met with his old friends. One of the first of those meetings is described by John Nelson. "I was desired once more," he remarks, "to go to Gomersal Field-head, to speak with Mr. Ingham. When I got there, David Taylor was with him in the parlour, and spoke kindly to me; but when Mr. Taylor was gone, he began to talk to me about making division among the Brethren. I told him, I did not want to make division; I wanted the people to be saved. But he said, 'We cannot receive you or Mr. WESLEY into our community, till he publicly declares he has printed false doctrine, and you declare you have preached false.' I said, 'Wherein?' He then burst out into laughter, and said, 'In telling the people that they may live without committing sin.'" * This is noticed with a view to shew one of the grand points of difference between Mr. Ingham's society and the original Methodists, and that David Taylor still respected John Nelson, which respect was some restraint upon Mr. Ingham while he continued in the room. But it was not long before David's change of sentiment produced very opposite feelings to those of kindness. "When Mr. Bennet and I went to Stanedge," says John Nelson, "we met David Taylor, who had got so much into the poor sinnership, that he would scarcely speak to me; he called Mr. Bennet to a distance, and said, he was sorry that he was going to take me into Derbyshire, for I was so full of law and reason, that I should do a great deal of harm wherever I preached." † Stanedge lies to the west of Fulwood, about eight miles from Sheffield.

In thus noticing the oral controversies between the first Methodist preachers in this neighbourhood and the Moravians, the writer desires it to be distinctly understood, that he takes no share in them in point of personal feeling, and that he only introduces the subject as far as it is connected with the progress of Methodism in

* Journal, p. 68.

† Ibid. pp. 77, 78.

these parts. There was a great deal of severity of expression employed, which must have originated in irritation of mind. John Nelson, in the warmth of his zeal, might talk about "German stillness," which conveys the notion of paralyzed exertion, but which might denote no more than what is really visible in our own body, in the difference which exists between one whom we denominate a "lively, zealous man," and a preacher of perhaps equal piety, and as substantially and permanently useful, but of more sober feeling. That German stillness denoted inactivity, or perfect quietism, cannot for a moment be admitted, either in reference to Mr. Ingham or the other Moravians noticed, who were supposed to be infected with it, because they are represented by those who prefer the charge, as travelling from place to place to preach the gospel; and even John Nelson himself "desired to die, rather than live, to see the children devoured by these boars out of the German wood,"*—an expression, by-the-bye, which, while it would be unjustifiable to tolerate it, proves that they possessed a zealous spirit of proselytism. Equal allowance must be made, too, in reference to the word "sinnership," which a pious Moravian would shudder to interpret as advocating the unrestrained dominion of sin over the heart and life; but would rather construe it into that deep self-abasement of spirit, which every pious man feels when he reflects on his unworthiness and unprofitableness before unsullied Majesty, never forgetting his sins, though a subject of Divine grace. With *our* comments on these terms, they might be rendered very objectionable; but a Moravian would give a very different turn to the whole. That there were differences of opinion, and very often no more than individual opinion, is but too certain. This, however, has always been the case; and to suppose that men will be brought to think alike, is as extravagant a notion, as the experiment of the Emperor Charles V. was ridiculous, who brought a multitude of clocks and watches together, with a view to make them keep exact time with each other. To have

* Journal, p. 58.

brought these machines so near together, as to answer all the useful purposes of life, was laudable ; an attempt to go further was an act of vain and fruitless curiosity. Neither Methodists nor Moravians would feel disposed to unchristianize Peter, because Paul had to withstand him to the face,—to say that Paul and Barnabas were not good men, because there was a sharp contention between them,—or that Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield were destitute of grace, because they differed in opinion. Methodism is deeply indebted to Moravianism, and it will admit of a doubt, whether it would ever have been what it is, had it not been for the instructions which Mr. WESLEY, under God, received from the Moravians ; and the grant made from our Missionary fund to the Moravian missions, when the latter were labouring under great pecuniary difficulties, through the late dreadful struggle on the continent of Europe, is an evidence of a more liberal spirit than was often indulged at the period to which this part of the history refers, when hard names were not uncommon, and conscientious differences existed. They are not general terms or general censures, that will admit us into the niceties of religious controversy ; nor are we to attribute to the separate bodies what is only applicable to a few individuals.

John Bennet had been rendered useful in Derbyshire prior to this period, and was apparently conducting John Nelson thither to give additional weight to the truths which he had delivered. The late Mr. John Marsden, of London, who was born at Chelmorton, in Derbyshire, September 1721, was awakened under the preaching of Mr. Bennet. A person of the name of Thomas Bennett, an inhabitant of the village of Chelmorton, and a pious man, applied to Mr. Marsden to desire his father to permit a Methodist preacher to preach in his barn, saying, “ When I was a young man, the Puritans* came and preached at Town-end, (the principal house in the village,) and the people were

* This name was given by way of reproach to the Dissenters in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from their attempting a *purer* form of worship and discipline than had yet been *established*. It was afterwards frequently applied to the Non-conformists in the time of Charles the Second.
—See Neal's *Hist. of the Puritans*.

much affected under them. There is a man called John Bennet, who preaches just in the same way, and the people are affected under him in the same manner; and if you will procure your father's barn, I will invite him." This request being acceded to, John Bennet went to the place and preached. Under his first sermon, Mr. Marsden, who was then little more than twenty years of age, together with his brothers, were convinced of their guilt and depravity. These young men, with Mr. Lomas, (son-in-law to Mr. Thomas Bennett, who had borrowed the barn, and grandfather to the late Mr. Robert Lomas, an itinerant preacher,) immediately began to search the Scriptures, to see "whether what John Bennet had said was true." By this inquiry, they became still more deeply affected with the conviction that they were fallen, condemned sinners; and never rested till they experienced redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins. This blessed consciousness of the favour of God, Mr. John Marsden appears to have, in general, enjoyed to the period of his dissolution, which took place in the 80th year of his age, after an union of more than half a century with the Methodists. One of his daughters is the wife of Mr. James Townley, an itinerant preacher. Mr. Marsden was the eldest but one of four brothers, viz. Richard, John, William, and George, all of whom are gone to their great reward, after having adorned the gospel for many years in union with the Methodist body.* Mr. William Marsden, father of the present Mr. George Marsden, President of the Manchester Conference in 1821, died in 1801, in the 75th year of his age. Mr. Bradburn preached his funeral sermon in Oldham-street Chapel, Manchester, in which he has furnished some account of the other brothers.† We may consider this family as indebted to John Bennet, under God, for their religion; and the day of God alone will reveal the full extent of his usefulness.

Both the instability and usefulness of David Taylor had, in a certain religious circle, attracted considerable

* Meth. Mag. 1808, pp. 32, 33.

† Meth. Mag. 1802, pp. 184, 242; see also Mag. 1808, p. 80.

notice. The Countess of Huntingdon, in a letter to Mr. WESLEY, observes, "Your opinion of David Taylor will, I fear, be found true. I think it will be best to take no notice till I find a way open to do it effectually. When we lose our plainness, there ends the Christian. A double-minded man who can bear? I have enclosed you Mr. S.'s conversation; he has left the Moravians, as he tells me, and is not quite at rest now. I have no doubt but he (Mr. S. I suppose,) will be brought right at last."* About two months after this, she again remarks, addressing Mr. WESLEY, "John Taylor is gone to be an assistant to David Taylor, and if it can be brought about, to become a school-master among those people who are awakened."† Both of these letters were written in the early part of this year, and shew the state into which he had relapsed previous to Mr. WESLEY's conversation with him; and his state soon after, shews that the infant society in Sheffield had not much to expect from him. The few, however, who were now united in church fellowship, were not entirely dependant upon his exertions. They were occasionally supplied with preachers sent by Mr. WESLEY; and they held prayer-meetings among themselves.

One of the brightest ornaments recorded in the annals of Methodism, already named, the late Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, who was a member of the Methodist Society in Sheffield, when it did not exceed a dozen persons, began now to occupy a prominent place in the religious part of the community. The greater part of the facts relative to this pious female, many of which were closely connected with the early history of Methodism in these parts, were communicated to the Rev. James Wood, who received them with a view to publish, but unfortunately lost them in the neighbourhood of Bristol, when going into the country part of the circuit. An original document or two, in her own hand-writing, from which copies were taken, has fortunately survived the wreck; and as no separate account has been published of her, nor any at this remote period likely to appear, the present opportunity is embraced of entering

* Ibid. 1798, p. 490.

† Ibid. p. 642.

more into detail than otherwise comports with the design and nature of a brief history like the present. To suffer so much genuine worth to drop into the dust without greater publicity than has hitherto been given to it, would be to deprive the grace of God of due honour, and the church of a proper share of religious instruction.

She was born in April, in the year 1723. Her maiden name was Jane Holmes. Her father died when she was five years of age, and her mother, who was a moral character, restrained her from every thing she deemed sinful, and taught her according to the best light she possessed. Her principal delight, when a child, was not in amusement and finery, but in committing to memory sacred subjects. Once, at the age of nine, she was remarkably impressed in reading the account of the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai; a sacred awe rested upon her spirits; she wept, and her mother, knowing the cause, pressed her to her bosom, saying, she hoped it was a spark of grace which God had lit up in her soul. On her mother's second marriage, which was about the sixth year of her widowhood, and the eleventh of her daughter's age, she was sent to the dancing-school, an amusement perfectly innocent to a mere moralist. This exposed her to gay, thoughtless company, and she soon lost that tone of serious feeling which had hitherto possessed her soul. Instead of looking into her "Book of Prayers for all occasions," with which she was provided, three times in the day, she now satisfied herself with twice. She still retained some tenderness of conscience, continued to repeat her prayers morning and evening, was confirmed by the Bishop, and, at a suitable age, though with great fear, was taken by her mother to receive, once a month, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the latter ordinance, neither of them were able to discern fully the Lord's body. Not aware of the evil of it, she was taught to play at cards at the age of seventeen. She was at this period rather in a delicate state of health; and her father-in-law, who commonly attended the horse-races, which, thank God! have long been given up, would have her to take a ride to them for the good of her health: and

with a view to elevate her spirits, her mother united with her medical attendant in recommending to her notice the performance of an "*innocent comedy*." When she related to her mother what she had seen at the theatre, it was agreed that she should attend no more. It was at this critical period, when she was about to be given up to the world, that her aunt Bayley was converted to God, and began, in private conversation, to preach to her the doctrine of the *new-birth*. This was in David Taylor's time, and prior to the erection of the chapel by Mr. Edward Bennet.

When the first Methodist preacher entered Sheffield, her aunt, fully prepared to receive him, gave him her countenance and support. David Taylor was known, and had confined his labours chiefly within doors. But here was a stranger,—a man who took his stand in the most public streets of the town,—a man who was still more strenuous than even David Taylor, in insisting on, "*Ye must be born again*;" for till David went to London, he was a mere novitiate in the Christian faith. The people took alarm; a new religion was, in their estimation, springing up, and the Church was in danger. It was during this state of general feeling, that Mrs. Bayley invited her sister and her niece to hear a Methodist sermon. Though they complied with the invitation, it was not without painful apprehensions of either being turned aside from the Church, or of offending the clergy with whom they were intimately acquainted. As the invitation extended to a social visit as well as to preaching, they attended in due time. The preacher was present, with a few serious people. They sung several hymns, in which they engaged with considerable devotional feeling, and seemed much delighted with each other's society. Miss Holmes perceived, that they possessed a something which constituted their felicity, of which she was destitute; and the conversation turning on the conversion of the heart to God, she desired that she might experience the same, and attended preaching in the evening with a mixture of joy and grief.

Soon after this, she was sent from home to finish her education; and before she returned, she heard that her mother had connected herself with the Methodists, and

was in a state of mental derangement. On her arrival at home, which was in the course of the next summer, she was surprized to find her mother perfectly sane. In the mean time one of the clergymen, at the request of her father-in-law, preached no less than four sermons against the Methodists, shewing the danger of leaving the Church, and the wickedness of encouraging those wolves in sheep's clothing, the preachers. Her mother having become decidedly serious, and herself on her ferment, she was scarcely so agreeable at home, from a slight inclination to gaiety, as formerly. She still, however, was not without serious thought and good desires, though terribly afraid, if she should attend preaching, that she should be branded with the appellation of Methodist. A report was in circulation, that Mr. CHARLES WESLEY would preach, which greatly pleased her, under an impression, that, as he was a clergyman, less shame would be attached to an attendance on his ministry; but when she arrived at the place, the preacher proved to be another person. In the course of his sermon, he extolled the Established Church, and took occasion to vindicate his doctrines by an appeal to its Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles,—a practice much in use in early Methodism, and absolutely necessary to ward off the aspersions of some of the clergy. At the close of his discourse, he took occasion to shew, that the Church of England would avail but little, unless its members, and especially his hearers, were born again, and he laid down the various marks of the new birth. These marks, his young hearer found, were not altogether characteristic of her state. She nevertheless was more fully convinced of the wickedness and hardness of the heart; and, in a conversation with the preacher, who told her that she must first feel her need of a Saviour before she could find mercy, and that he knew a female, who, after she was convinced of sin, declared that she would neither eat nor drink till she had experienced the pardoning love of God, her mind was still less at rest. She thought the person extremely wicked to form such a resolution, as she ran the hazard of starvation, and was not a little offended at the preacher, wishing herself out of his presence. He would not suffer her to depart without prayer; and, elevating his

voice to no ordinary pitch, he still became the more offensive to her. But the Spirit of God was at work ; she soon was in an agony of soul ; and her mother, who never had seen any person in such deep distress of mind, told the preacher her state a few days afterwards. He said, he trusted to see many more as bad as she ; her mother, on the other hand, hoped never to see another. He told her to inform her daughter, that Jesus Christ was pleading for her at the right hand of the Majesty on high. When her mother attempted to encourage her with the reflection, she immediately asked, as if the enemy of her soul had spoken within her, for the twofold purpose of tormenting the one and depriving the other of comfort, "How does he know Christ is interceding for me ? Has he been in heaven to see ?" A person who was going to preaching, called upon her mother, and, seeing the daughter in such a state, proposed to sing one of the hymns for 'Mourners,' and pray ; but neither prayer nor praise afforded delight. She felt shut up in unbelief, and was tempted to indulge hard thoughts against her mother for bringing her into that state, by wishing her to attend the Methodist ministry. On retiring to rest, the servant who had prepared the bed, said, "You are very ill ; I never saw you look so ill before." "Oh," she replied, "it is this proud heart, this heart of flint !" She lay down without prayer. There seemed to be a dreadful conflict between nature and grace ; but grace obtained the ascendancy, for, before she closed her eyes, the Lord imparted to her a measure of that peace which passeth understanding.

On experiencing such serenity of mind, after a storm, she called on her mother, who asked her if she had not been asleep ; "O no," she replied, "nor have I any desire for repose, if I continue as happy as I now am." She rose next morning early, and attended preaching at five o'clock, in full possession of her peace. The preacher asked her whether she could say her sins were forgiven ; afraid to answer in the affirmative, in so many precise terms, her affectionate mother standing by, said, "Sir, she thinks she is accepted, and finds the fear of death taken away." "God," said the preacher, "never accepts of any person till he has forgiven that

person's sins ; you must look for it ; expect something you have never yet received." This, as was natural, threw a damp upon her spirits, as she was not perfectly acquainted with the way in which a sinner comes to Christ. It operated, however, powerfully upon her mind. She went home, and concluded, that, in order to be enabled to say she was forgiven, she must say her prayers ; but she knew not what prayer to adopt. Looking up to heaven, she said, " Lord, if Thou art not angry with me, give me power to wrestle with Thee as Jacob did with the angel." The power was imparted ; she was enabled to say, " I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me ;" and that very moment she was filled with " joy unspeakable," exclaiming, " O Lord, this is the forgiveness of sins ; the enemy may transform himself into an angel of light, but cannot fill the soul with love." She was now on the mountain top, enabled to pray without a form, and was ready to declare to others that the Lord was gracious.

Satan, who is ever seeking whom he may devour, was prepared with a snare. Her father-in-law, with a view to reproach the Methodists, invented and propagated various falsehoods ; and she, with improper warmth, said, " Father, these are lies, and you know them to be such." Instantly, she observes, " the enemy snatched the roll out of my hand ; but I sought it with tears, and found it in the course of two or three days, learning from what I suffered." She was not content to eat her morsel alone, but went among her relations and acquaintance, declaring the goodness of God. They told her that she was sufficiently pious before ; that she ought not to leave the Church ; that the Methodists were composed of the lowest classes of the people ; and that she would only be despised by those around her. To this, she opposed the good which she had derived, informed them that she loved the Church better than ever, and only sought that honour which cometh from God. An uncle, from London, made her an advantageous offer, to go and live with him, provided she would leave the Methodists. But she was unmoved. She regularly attended preaching in the public streets, for at this period of her religious experience, which was

about 1740-1, there was no better accommodation for the preacher. Not unfrequently she saw the preacher pulled down from his stand, the clothes partly torn from his person, while she herself shared the insults of the mob.

It was not long before another snare was prepared for her. As the few people who adhered to the Methodist doctrine were poor and despised, she concluded, that it would be right to add a little lustre to their meanness. Accordingly, one Sabbath-day morning, she decked herself in her gayest attire, supposing, in the simplicity of her soul, that her respectable appearance might stamp honour on those of meaner garb. Her aunt Bayley, not aware of her motives, cautioned her against pride, and even charged her with it, requesting her to read the 3d chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, from the 16th verse. She instantly threw aside every ornament; but concluded that what she lost in gaiety, she might add in costliness, and proposed the attire of a rich Quaker for a model. This snare, too, was broken. She saw it was as improper to spend needless *time*, as it was to be at any needless *expense*, in dress. Several slanderous reports were in circulation, in which she had her portion, as in the "pitiless peltings" of the mob. Time afforded a satisfactory refutation, and she learnt from the whole the necessity of exercising charity towards others.

Having, in tracing her religious experience, reached that part of the History of Methodism assigned for it in the margin, it will be proper to return to the state of the infant society, whose members were in possession of the chapel erected by Mr. Edward Bennet, and entirely, as David Taylor seems to have cooled in his fervour, under the tuition of Mr. WESLEY's preachers. In addition to persons in mature life, of whom Mrs. Moor, Sarah Knutton's mother, was one, there were four or five young females who met in band with each other, two of whom were Miss J. Holmes and Hannah Oldale. The latter was the intimate friend of Miss Holmes, and the ninth person who joined the Methodist Society in Sheffield. She at this time enjoyed a sense of her acceptance with God; and, convinced of the necessity of a

further work of grace, sought and found it, and lived in the enjoyment of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit upwards of forty years. She died about the year 1816, when Mr. B. Wilkinson preached her funeral sermon, at Heeley. One of her daughters was married to Paul Booth, son of Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, and is still living. Miss J. Holmes appears to have been the oldest member of the band. Referring to this little Christian family, she observes, "the preachers taught one doctrine, and we all earnestly desired the blessed liberty from sin." Her mother, Mrs. Marriott, that being her name on her second marriage, was also making progress in the Divine life.

CHAP. III.

Messrs. Trembath and Larwood preach in the town and neighbourhood—Mr. Wesley's second visit—Dissensions—John Bennet's union with Mr. Wesley, with a further account of his history—Mr. Whitfield's arrival and reception—The preaching-house demolished by a mob—Mr. Wesley again preaches in Sheffield—David Taylor's further fluctuations of conduct—Mr. Charles Wesley's arrival in the neighbourhood, and his providential escape from the fury of the mob—The preachers impressed for soldiers.

1742. As there were no minutes of any Conference till 1744, nor an account of any stations of preachers till several years after, we can only come to a knowledge of the principal agents employed in the work, in local situations, through the medium of biography, eye and ear witnesses, or persons, who, in early life, were acquainted with the original members of society. On this subject, satisfaction is received by consulting one of the *living records*, Mr. S. Birks, who is ever at hand. Two of the first preachers, in addition to John Nelson, who devoted much of their time and strength to the culture of this part of the vineyard, were Mr. Samuel Larwood and Mr. John Trembath. Mr. Myles fixes the commencement of Mr. Larwood's itinerant labours in 1743*, but Mr. Birks recollects him in this neighbourhood so early as 1741. A considerable time prior to John Nelson's military captivity, from which he was released in 1744†, Mr. Larwood is noticed by him, as abused by the mob at Wakefield.‡ When he came into this neighbourhood, he had come direct from London on foot. After labouring here some time, he proceeded to the north, where he met with Mr. Thomas Mitchel, who acknowledges the encouragement he received from him.|| We

* Chron. Hist., p. 448; 4th ed. † Journal, p. 170, ‡ Ibid. p. 96.
|| Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 318.

find him in Dublin, in 1748, labouring with Mr. Jos. Cownley, and manifesting rather an arbitrary spirit in the reception and expulsion of members of society.* He returned to England, and in 1750, Mrs. Hannah Harrison heard him preach at Acomb, near York, and “was pleased with his deliberate manner of preaching.”† He left the connexion, and settled in London about the year 1753-4, where he took a chapel in the Borough of Southwark, called Zoar, in which he continued to preach, till he was taken hence, by a fever, November 1756. Mr. WESLEY remarks in his Journal, “I buried the remains of Samuel Larwood, who died of a fever on Sunday morning, deeply convinced of his unfaithfulness, and yet hoping to find mercy.”‡

When Mr. Trembath laboured here, he was pious, useful, and popular. So much was he noticed, that a poor ideot, who was in the habit of leading his horse to water, caught the general sentiment. When asked to whom the horse belonged, his invariable reply was, “Mr. Trembath’s, a Methodist preacher, and a child of God.” On one occasion, Mr. Birks and his father accompanied Mr. Trembath from Thorp to Long-Houghton. The school-room which was provided, proved too strait for the congregation, in consequence of which the preacher took his stand out of doors. But such was the rudeness of the mob, that he was prevented from proceeding. The gentleman who occupied Houghton-hall saw Mr. Birks in the crowd, and invited him, together with the preacher and as many of the people as were disposed to worship God peaceably, to follow him to the Hall. While his countenance awed the rude in humbler stations, an enclosure in his own grounds afforded perfect security to the more serious part of the audience. The Hall itself now affords shelter to a Methodist preacher and his congregation. After Mr. Trembath had introduced the gospel into several of the towns and villages around, and itinerated in different parts of England, he went to Dublin, where he was ex-

* Meth. Mag. 1794, p. 477. † Ibid. 1802, p. 320.

‡ Atmore’s Meth. Mem. p. 240. This is a work which has not met with that share of countenance from the Methodist body, which it really merits.

tensively useful, and from whence, in 1747, he wrote a letter to Mr. WESLEY relative to the work of God.* He wrote again to Mr. WESLEY, from Cork, in 1756†, which shews a partial quickening on the reception of Mr. WESLEY's letter in 1755, on his fall.‡ But in 1760, from a second letter of Mr. WESLEY's to him ‖, it appears he continued as he had lived for some years. Sheffield had him in his first and best days, and, it is to be feared, in his *only* good days. When Mr. WESLEY was on one of his last visits to Cornwall, poor Trembath was driving some ponies, loaded with lime, by which he procured a scanty subsistence. Knowing Mr. WESLEY's carriage, as it passed him, he left his charge and ran after it. Former times rushing upon his soul, he most affectingly, while running towards the object of his pursuit, exclaimed in the language of Elisha to the departing prophet, “ My father, my father !”

1743. Mr. WESLEY visited these parts, for the second time, in the month of January, 1743. He remarks, “ Between Doncaster and Epworth, I overtook one who immediately accosted me, with so many, and so impertinent questions, that I was quite amazed. In the midst of some of them, concerning my travels and my journey, I interrupted him and asked, ‘ Are you aware, that we are on a longer journey ? That we are travelling toward eternity ? ’ He replied instantly, ‘ O, I find you, I find you ! I know where you are. Is not your name WESLEY ? ’Tis pity ! ’Tis great pity ! Why could not your father's religion serve you ? Why must you have a new religion ? ’ I was going to reply ; but he cut me short, by crying out in triumph, ‘ I am a Christian, I am a Church-man ! I am a Church-man ! I am none of your Culamites : ’ as plain as he could speak ; for he was so drunk, he could but just keep his seat. Having, then, clearly won the day, or as his phrase was, ‘ put them all down,’ he began kicking his horse on both sides, and rode off as fast as he could.”§

Having taken Epworth and Birstall in his route, he says,—“ Wednesday, Jan. 5, I came wet and weary to

* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 528.
p. 492.

† Ibid. 1779, p. 539.
§ Journals, vol. ii. p. 181.

‡ Ibid. 1798,

|| Ibid. 1780, p. 448.

Sheffield.”* Here he took up his residence for the night, and set off for Donnington park at eight o'clock the next morning. His silence relative to the state of the Society at this period is supplied by his observations respecting it in April, when returning from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. “ Friday, the 8th,” says he, “ I preached at Knaresborough and at Leeds on ‘ By grace ye are saved; through faith.’ The three following days I divided between Leeds and Birstal; and on Tuesday rode to Sheffield. I found the Society both here and at Barley Hall, earnestly pressing toward the mark: although there had not been wanting here also those, who by fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”† His remarks on his tour through these parts, in January, direct us, in some measure, to the persons to whom he refers. John Nelson had given him a melancholy account of many, who once made considerable progress in religion, in the vicinity of Birstal, who had become thoughtless, trifling, and in some instances immoral. It was from thence that Mr. WESLEY had come, where the leaven had not ceased to work. To the influence of the opinions propagated by David Taylor and others, Miss Holmes probably refers, where, in her MS. Journal, she says, after having stated that the preachers all preached “ one doctrine,” and the Society was pressing after full liberty from sin, “ the preachers began to slide into different opinions, their love decreased, and their labours were less blessed than usual. The mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus seemed to be lost sight of, and a party spirit prevailed. I was cut to the heart, when I heard my dearest friends speaking evil one of another. I cried aloud; I told them they were crucifying Christ in the house of his friends; my head began to hang down; and I could not reprove sin as I had done before.” She further observes, “ The preachers were not so serious in some instances as they had been, in their common visits. Some of them thought we had leaned too much to works, and left Mr. WESLEY, which shook my confidence in some degree. But the Lord supported me. As I had

* Journal, vol. ii. p. 182.

† Ibid. p. 194.

received Christ Jesus the Lord, so I was determined to walk in Him. I stood where stronger fell. I could not but exclaim, Oh who would not love such a Saviour as this ! He is strong to deliver ; I could truly say, I had no sharer of my heart with him." These are the very sentiments which the persons referred to by Mr. WESLEY sought to diffuse, and from which Miss Holmes and others were happily preserved. She travelled from place to place to hear preaching ; a few miles were no object, and she feared no weather. It was about this time that Mr. Samuel Birks became first acquainted with her.

While some were deserting Mr. WESLEY, others were uniting themselves to him. One of these was Mr. John Bennet, who, though he had conversed with him before, was not till now connected with him. He met with Mr. WESLEY near Chesterfield, April 15th, the day on which he left Sheffield, and was invited by him to London, Bristol, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, from which period he commenced his itinerant labours among the Methodists. Few men were more useful in the early stages of Methodism than he. He superintended a circuit extending through part of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, in which he rode about 200 miles every fortnight†, and which was emphatically called, "John Bennet's Circuit."‡ He afterwards sided with Mr. Whitfield, in reference to Calvinism, thus embracing what, in 1747, threw him into such a state of perplexity, as to induce him to term it a "place of torment." He separated, publicly, from Mr. WESLEY at Bolton, in Lancashire, April 3, 1752, styling him a Pope, and charging him with preaching popery ; and took a considerable part of the Society with him.§ He finally settled at Warbutton in Cheshire, where a meeting-house was erected for him in 1754—confining himself to a very narrow sphere of usefulness, after having been in the habit of "preaching thirty-four times in the fortnight, besides meeting the Societies, visiting the sick, &c."|| He suffered much in body after he became a

* Grace Bennet's Memoirs, pp. 20, 21.

† Ibid. p. 19.

‡ Nelson's Journal, p. 83.

§ Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 322 ; also Mr. W.'s Journal, vol. iii. pp. 113, 196.

|| Grace Bennet's Mem., p. 19 ; also, Atmore's Meth. Mem., pp. 49—51.

resident minister, and all asperity vanished before his death. Honourable mention is made of him by Mr. Grimshaw, who travelled with him into Lancashire, Cheshire, and other places*, visiting societies which had been raised through his instrumentality, before Mr. WESLEY had preached in that part of the kingdom. In looking into an interesting letter of John Bennet's respecting the work of God in his extensive circuit†, we cannot but lament that the narrowing system of Calvinism should have curtailed his usefulness, that a few non-essentials, which will admit persons of either side into heaven, should have induced him to lessen those labours, so essential, under God, to the felicity of thousands of immortal beings. He died rejoicing, May 24th, 1759. Through some mistake, Mr. Atmore fixes the commencement of his itinerancy in 1747, and the period of his separation from Mr. WESLEY on Dec. 26, and not, as stated by his son, Mr. Wm. Bennet, who is in possession of all his papers, in April, 1752.

In addition to others, who have been noticed as the first-fruits of Methodism in Derbyshire, Joseph Hadfield deserves to be handed down to future generations. He was born in or about Oct. 29, 1724, on a small estate belonging to His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, in Peak Forest. He lived at this period at Small Dale, near Tideswell. One writer states his conversion to God to have taken place before he was twenty years of age, and another pronounces it impossible to ascertain the exact period; however, both agree to the *fact*, which fact was fully established by the unequivocal testimony of his whole temper and behaviour during a period of at least *seventy years*. Perhaps we may venture to fix on Mr. WESLEY as the instrument of this great change, since it appears that Joseph often spoke with rapture of the abundant consolation he experienced under his ministry. Having tasted the word of life, he became eager to hear the gospel, and evinced his warm attachment to its ministers. Hence, after the labour of the day, he generally went four, six, or eight miles to hear a sermon

* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 475—7. † Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 471.

preached by Messrs. Bennet, Nelson, Westal, &c.*, and frequently acted as guide to these apostolic travellers in that mountainous country. He suffered much persecution, but always manifested the meek, humble disciple. He experienced much delight and profit in the means of grace, and steadily continued to attend them, though at a distance from them, till under the pressure of growing years and infirmities he failed in the attempt. He proceeded part of the way, as usual, to the house of God, but was obliged to return. In his confinement he applied to the Sacred Oracles. When visited by his friends, and questioned respecting the state of his mind, his general answer was, "I feel the Lord present." About six days before his death, its approach was apparent both to himself and those around him. He spoke but little, but that little sufficiently indicated that his faith remained unshaken, and his peace undiminished, till he resigned his soul into the hands of his Creator. "God is with me," was his language; "His will be done." He died in September 1815; and seemed to have outlived reproach; for when saints or sinners heard, "Joseph Hadfield is dead," they spontaneously rejoined, "He was a good man." Scarcely an octavo page and a half is written of the account of Joseph Hadfield†; and thus, through the indifference of friends and others, a volume of unrecorded facts has been buried with him. John Bennet, one of Joseph's most early religious friends, paid particular attention to the work of God in Derbyshire. He did not, however, forget Sheffield, where he received his first serious impressions; and about this time his visits were often repeated.

With such a man as John Bennet in the neighbourhood, the little Society here could not but be greatly benefited. He was in his first love. The members needed such aid. A Laodicean spirit was not the only thing they had to oppose, and which had produced in some a kind of moral torpor; but Mr. Whitfield visited the neighbourhood, who, ere this, had separated from Mr. WESLEY, and obtained no small share of influence in his favour. Hence, as of old, when one was for Paul,

* Meth. Mag. 1815, p. 231; Ibid. for 1817, p. 367. † Ibid. 1817, p. 367.

and another for Apollos, some were for Whitfield, and others for WESLEY; and these two eminent men were placed in opposition to each other, and the people suffered a rivalry of affection to take possession of their hearts, prejudicial to the interests of both. When Mr. Whitfield first visited these parts, he was met by Mr. S. Birks, at Rothwell, near Wakefield, accompanied with John Johnson, of Barley Hall, who acted as guides to him to High Green, near Thorncliffe, where he slept all night at Mr. Joseph Smith's. He set off next morning, and preached in a large orchard in the town of Rotherham, from whence he journeyed to Sheffield. Here he met with a friendly reception from Mr. Edward Bennet, who attached himself to him, and afterwards united with the Calvinists.

The persecuting part of the populace now became outrageous. Finding that stones, mud, rotten eggs, and other materials produced no effect in intimidating the Methodists, they concluded that the most effectual plan would be, to demolish the building in which they worshipped; and the nest being thus destroyed, the birds would disperse. Accordingly, a grand muster took place on the 25th of May, 1743, when the whole of the building, erected in 1741, was levelled with the ground.* The daring rioters, according to the most authentic information that can be obtained, began by undermining as much of the building as would admit of its standing, till the sportive moment arrived for the general crash; this being done, they then, by means of ropes and long poles, involved the whole in one common ruin. This chapel, which Mr. Hunter gives Mr. E. Bennet the credit of erecting, as well as the one that succeeded it, was not reared without the subscriptions of the Society. Being now destitute of a place of worship, the members, with Mr. E. Bennet at their head, commenced another building.† Towards this erection subscriptions were again raised; and Mr. E. Bennet, being one of the principal subscribers, had, by the consent of the members, and for the better security of the place, the building made over to him. This was the subject of considera-

* History of Sheffield and Hallamshire, p. 171.

† Ibid.

ble uneasiness afterwards, for, by some means or other, it fell entirely into the hands of Mr. Bennet; and, on his leaving the Methodists, the other subscribers felt themselves aggrieved, that the whole of the edifice should go with him. To settle the dispute at this period is impossible. The probable conjecture is, that he rendered the Society some compensation for their share in the expense of the erection, through which it was entirely alienated to himself; for he seems to have been too good a man to have been guilty of fraudulent conduct. The building, it is reported, was made in the form of a dwelling-house, and with chimneys, with a view to beguile the turbulent, that they might not pull it down while in a state of progress; and certainly this report is not at all contradicted by its appearance as it now stands, in the occupation of Mr. Addy, hair-dresser, in Pinstone-lane. It appeared, on examining the building, that the ground-floor was not taken up, on its entire appropriation to dwelling-houses. The fire-places and partition-walls of the lower rooms have the flags for their basis, on which the poor people used to stand and kneel in the solemn worship of God. The writer never entered the house, or passed the door, without feeling a degree of veneration for the spot. It was several times attacked by the rioters, but survived their fury.*

What steps were taken on the occasion, to recover damages, and to punish the ringleaders, is not certain; but the probability is in favour of active measures, as all was quiet towards the month of November, which scarcely would otherwise have been the case, since, from still more subsequent proceedings, it is evident that the same spirit was inherent in most of them. "Friday, November 25th, at the desire of Arthur Bate," says Mr. WESLEY, "I rode to Wakefield in order to talk with his wife. But I soon found I did not come to talk, but to hear.† After an hour or two, we rode on to Barley Hall, where I preached on 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Thence we rode to Sheffield, where I preach-

* Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 171.

† See a letter of this female's to Mr. Wesley, about two years afterwards, Journals, vol. ii. p. 321.



SECOND PREACHING HOUSE, SHEFFIELD.



ed, in perfect peace, on ‘ We know that we are of God.’* Here he stopped during the night. Mr. E. Bennet generally entertained him at this period.

Previous to his coming to Sheffield, he had been at Syke-house, where he “ received a full account of poor David Taylor, once a workman that needed not to be ashamed,” and gives the following summary account of the changes he had undergone during the short period of three years:—“ Three years since, he knew all we preached to be true. Then Mr. Ingham brought him over to German stillness. When I talked with him at Sheffield, he was thoroughly sensible of his mistake ; but Mr. Simpson soon drew him into it again. A third time he was deeply convinced by my brother, and unconvinced shortly after. He was once more brought into the Scripture way by Mr. Graves, and seemed to be established therein : but in a few months he veered about to the old point, and has been a *poor sinner* indeed ever since.”† He at length *missed his providential way* relative to his marriage, in not submitting to the mode prescribed by law. In the judgment of those who knew him best, he took this step (though unguarded and unjustifiable) in the simplicity of his heart ; this, however, was far from satisfying many of his friends ; and, viewing his conduct in this instance in an unfavourable light, they became deeply prejudiced against him, and his usefulness in consequence was greatly impeded. He was now among the Moravians ; but, not finding himself comfortable, he soon left them, and then united himself to, or at least attended the meetings of the Society of Friends ; but neither did he there find rest. He afterwards returned again to the Methodists, and attempted to preach once more ; but, alas, the spirit was gone, and the residue of his days was spent in comparative obscurity.‡ What time he rejoined the Methodist body is not known ; but it is not improbable that he was in some way connected with it in 1760. Mr. Benjamin Wilkinson heard him at that period preach in a barn at Shire-Green ; and though only a boy about seven years

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 226.

† Ibid.

‡ Atmore’s Meth. Mem. p. 412.

of age, he has a perfect recollection of the impression made upon his heart at the time. The whole service inspired him with sacred awe; it seemed as though a voice spake to his inmost soul, "These are the people of God," and he could never, when he arrived at riper years, be induced to persecute them either in word or deed. David departed this life about the year 1780; and there is every reason to hope that, after all his tossings and changes, he anchored in God at last, and died in peace.

Mr. WESLEY appears to have entered Sheffield on this occasion as soon as circumstances would permit; for though tranquillity was restored by the month of November, we find him in the immediate neighbourhood without once entering the town; and that, too, at a time when his presence would have animated the Society. It might be deemed prudent not to enter immediately. However, what the few scared sheep could not find at home, they went abroad to seek. He was at Syke-house on July 26th; and, after visiting Newcastle-upon-Tyne and its vicinity, rode on, from Leeds and Birstal, to Barley Hall on the 25th of August. He observes, "Many from Sheffield were there. We rejoiced greatly together in 'Him who justifieth the ungodly.'"^{*} He then appears to have passed quietly through Sheffield to Nottingham without leaving any record of what had just happened. He was at Syke-house, also, on Oct. 28th.

1744. Though Methodism had obtained ground in Thorp, and at Barley Hall, and had acquired a degree of respectability from the character and circumstances of some of its adherents, yet persecution raged with considerable violence. A report having been circulated, that Mr. CHARLES WESLEY was going to preach at the latter place, the principal agents of mischief collected their forces together in the village of Thorp, through which he was first to pass. They disposed themselves in the most advantageous positions for the purpose of carrying their diabolical designs into execution. The main road lies directly through the village, and the road to Barley Hall makes an abrupt turn to the left after

* Journals, vol. ii. pp. 199, 200.

it is entered, without any opening to the right. Here they placed themselves; a certain portion sheltered by the hedges, on the road leading to Barley Hall, and another division concealed by the houses in the village, in an opposite direction to that which was to be entered by the preacher and his party. All were waiting in breathless expectation for the arrival of the travellers. Mr. Charles Wesley appeared, in company with the present Mr. S. Birks's father, and some other friends. They turned up the road leading to Barley Hall; before they had gone many yards, that detachment of the mob-forces in the front set up a shout of triumph; and on turning round to make their escape, they found themselves hemmed in and assailed by the remainder in the rear. It was a moment of peril; but the instrument of deliverance came unexpectedly to hand. Mr. S. Birks, who was then a stout young man, about eighteen years of age, and possessed of a considerable portion of native courage, had gone earlier than usual to plough that morning, in order to be able to attend preaching. He had left the field for the day, and was coming up the Barley Hall road in a direction to the mob. On hearing the shout of the persecutors, and supposing something particular was going forward, he cracked his whip, mounted on one horse, leading a second, and driving two abreast before him. Just when the crowd were about to proceed to acts of violence, he drove in among them, some leaping over the hedges, others flying before him, for their own personal safety; meanwhile, Mr. WESLEY and his friends made their escape, by retracing their steps, and going round by way of Chapel-town, to Barley Hall. The principal injury sustained was the loss of time, together with Mr. Charles Wesley's hat; but he arrived at the destined place, with his handkerchief tied over his wig, in which state he had to ride some miles, time enough to preach at one o'clock at noon. The mob were left behind, with little other power, after recovering from their panic, than to heap their curses upon the head of "young Birks," who also was out of sight, and had rode home with no small degree of heroic glee, to prepare for preaching at Mr. Johnson's, where he attended in high spirits, to the ne

small surprise of his father and the friends. The congregation worshipped in peace.

Not only did the vulgar lift up the arm of persecution against all who were designated Methodists, but persons in authority were on the alert to press the preachers for soldiers. The societies, a considerable distance round Sheffield, were thrown into the greatest alarm in the month of May. Mr. John Downes, for the better security of his person, was thrown into Lincoln gaol; John Nelson was secured on the 4th of the month; Thomas Beard, who became a martyr through the treatment he received, was also in custody. These men, contrary to the laws of both God and the king, were torn from their work and their families, and sent for soldiers, for no other reason assigned, than that they were preachers. John Downes was sent from Epworth, and John Nelson from Atherton, with both of which places Sheffield was connected, as occasionally sharing in the labours of the same preachers. Mr. WESLEY was now on his northern journey; a fortunate circumstance for the dispirited societies. He preached at Sheffield, May 11, which was his second visit after the destruction of the chapel; and preached again at Barley Hall, the next day, about 10 o'clock in the forenoon. It was his design to have gone the shortest way from Sheffield to Newcastle. But he altered his route, and went to Epworth: and, says he, "It was well I did, considering the inexpressible panic which had spread itself in all places. So that I came just in time to remind all the poor frightened sheep, that even the hairs of our head are all numbered." After spending the Sunday at Epworth, he rode to Syke-house, in the neighbourhood of Doncaster; but while journeying to the place, he was met by two or three persons, who advised him to go another way from the one he intended; assigning as a reason, that in one of the villages through which he would have to pass, the people were up in arms, and waiting for him on the road, many of whom had made themselves drunk, and so were prepared for any kind of mischief. He accordingly took another direction; but when he arrived at Syke-house, some of the friends hastened thither also, and told him, "All

the men in the congregation would be pressed." Others affirmed, "The mob was just coming, and that they would certainly fire the house, or pull it down to the ground." He told them, "Then our only way is, to make the best use of it while it is standing." So he began expounding the tenth chapter of St. Matthew; and no man opened his lips against them * Here Mr. WESLEY would receive a full account of John Nelson, as Mr. Holmes, of Syke-house, was present when he was taken by the constable's deputy for a soldier.† On Mr. WESLEY reaching Birstal, he found the brethren partly mourning, and partly rejoicing on John's account, and had "great cause to praise God, whose grace, even in these trying times, was sufficient for them."‡

Mr. WESLEY proceeded to the north on the 21st of May, and before his return, met with John Nelson and Thomas Beard, who had also proceeded thither with the regiment into which they were pressed. The place of meeting was the city of Durham, on the 8th of June. Mr. WESLEY simply states the fact ||, but John Nelson enters into particulars, in a way the most artless and touching§, and which evidently stamps the interview with the hand of God. During John's soldiership, the Lord was not unmindful of the societies in these parts. He found, on his return home, after his release from captivity, which was in the beginning of August, that Jonathan Reeves, who afterwards procured episcopal ordination, and became minister of the Magdalen Hospital, and curate of White-chapel, and John Bennet, had been supplying his lack of service, and that several, especially at Birstal and Leeds, had been converted through their preaching ¶ Mr. WESLEY, who returned from the north before John Nelson, accompanied John Bennet into Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire, on Thursday, the 14th of June, where, on the borders of each county, he preached a sermon; and on his return on the Friday, preached at Chinley at five o'clock in the morning, about noon in the Peak, and in the evening at Barley Hall; from whence he proceeded to Syke-house on the Saturday, and thence to Epworth.**

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 246.

† Nelson's Journal, p. 117, where the whole unvarnished tale is given; p. 111, and forward.

‡ Journals, vol. ii. p. 247.

|| Ibid. p. 248.

§ Nelson's Journal, p. 157.

¶ Ibid. p. 176.

** Wesley's Journals, vol. ii. p. 249.

CHAP. IV.

A second preaching-house—Sampson Staniforth's conversion—Mr. John Wilson—The work of God spreads to the neighbouring towns and villages—Mr. Lonly's family—Mr. Wesley preaches on the ruins of the old building—Richard Moss; narrowly escapes being impressed for a soldier—The alarm excited by the Scotch rebels—The demolition of the second preaching-house—Mr. Charles Wesley's second visit—Disturbance—Mr. Whitfield's second visit—Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats, unites with the Methodists,

1744. THE Society in Sheffield does not appear to have enjoyed their second place of worship any great length of time; for after Mr. Hunter notices its erection, he remarks, "About the same time, Mr. John Wilson, an optician, built for them another chapel, which was pulled down by the mob."* If Mr. Hunter had bestowed the same labour on the early history of the Methodists in Sheffield, as he has done on other religious bodies, and especially his favourite child, the *Upper Chapel*, he might have furnished both his readers and succeeding historians with some interesting details: but he has passed over the largest body of Christians in the town of Sheffield, the Established Church excepted, with a bare notice, and that very incorrect. However, he may be thanked for handing down to posterity the name of Mr. John Wilson, one of the firm friends and first supporters of Methodism in Sheffield, and uncle to the present T. Holy, Esq. of the same place. It is not improbable, that Mr. E. Bennet separated himself from the society about this period, which rendered Mr. Wilson's erection necessary, having rendered it impracticable for them to occupy the one to which he had so largely contributed. Where this third building was erected, of which the Methodists had the occupancy, is

* *Hist. of Hallamshire*, p. 171.

uncertain; though report fixes it in the neighbourhood of the other, and near what is now called Burgess-street.

1745. The members of society were called upon to rejoice in the work of God abroad, as well as at home. It was some time in the year 1745, when a letter from a young man, of the name of Sampson Staniforth, excited no small degree of interest among the truly pious. He was born in Sheffield, December, 1720, where he was put apprentice to a baker. He enlisted as a soldier at the age of nineteen, in spite of the tears and entreaties of his mother; and, after some hair-breadth escapes from situations into which he was led by his own rashness, he joined the army in Germany a few days after the battle of Dettingen. While he was abroad, he became serious, and associated with John Haime, John Evans, Wm. Clements, and other pious soldiers. No sooner did he obtain personal piety himself, than he felt an anxious solicitude for the salvation of his parents and friends. Accordingly, he wrote home, and the following is the account as given by himself:—“ My dear mother,” says he, “ had from time to time sent me little supplies, either in money, or in such things as she knew I wanted. I now sent her a long letter, asking pardon of my father and her for all my past disobedience, and telling them that God for Christ’s sake had forgiven all my sins. I thanked her for what she had done for me, but desired she would not send any thing more, as I knew it must straiten her, and I had now learnt to be content with my wages. This letter they did not understand, and it was handed about from one to another, till it came into the hands of one Mr. Wadsworth, a dissenting minister, who having known what manner of life I had led before, could not in any wise believe in it. However, he wrote me a friendly letter, and sent me a Bible, which was more welcome to me than gold; as was a Common Prayer book, which my mother sent me. A few days after, my letter came into the hands of Mr. John Wilson, who was then one of the chief persons in your (Mr. WESLEY’S) society in Sheffield, and much alive to God. He sent me a comfortable letter and a Hymn book, which much refreshed my soul. About this time you (Mr. WESLEY) sent some

books over, which were of great service to us."* There are three ministers of the name of Wadsworth, noticed by Hunter†, the father and two sons. The person who obtained the letter was probably the younger Wadsworth, who officiated in the Upper Chapel from 1740 to 1758. That he should not credit its contents is not at all surprising, when it is known that he, in common with many of the other dissenters of that day, had embraced the Arian notions of Dr. S. Clarke, a system but little favourable to experimental religion. When it fell into the hands of Mr. John Wilson, it was perused by one who understood it—one who could improve upon it—and one who knew how to give proper advice to its writer. The letter was written from Ghent; and it is probable that, in consequence of another written from the same place a little time before, by John Evans‡, Mr. WESLEY, who was labouring in every Christian way to do good, sent the books alluded to by Staniforth, an act of mercy which had not been known but through him. The life of Sampson Staniforth, replete with incident, is published in the Methodist Magazine||, written by himself, in a letter addressed to Mr. WESLEY. He was truly a child of both Providence and grace. He began to preach in 1754, and died in the work, at Deptford, as a local preacher, in 1799, in the 79th year of his age.§

Methodism continued to gain ground in Sheffield, and was gradually finding its way into the neighbouring towns and villages. Among others of its early seats, was High-green, about a mile from Thorncliffe. Both David Taylor and John Nelson had visited it prior to this. They were entertained by Mr. Joseph Smith, a farmer, in whose house they preached, and where a society was now formed, consisting of ten or twelve members. It was also introduced into Rotherham, Brinsworth, and Thribergh, as appears from Miss Holmes's papers. Mr. Lowly, steward to a lady of the name of Finch, lived at the latter place, and had, with

* Meth. Mag. 1783, p. 122.

† Wesley's Journals, vol. ii. p. 260.

‡ Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 169.

|| For 1783, pp. 13, 66, 122, 181,

237, 294, 348.

§ Meth. Mag. 1799, pp. 401, 608.

his family, attached himself to Mr. WESLEY. He was born in the year 1692 ; Mrs. Lowly in 1699, and died April, 1762. Miss Margaret Lowly, one of their daughters, was born September 2nd, 1719, and was deeply pious. In a letter dated February, 1745, from Thribergh, communicated by a descendant, she observes, to another female, "I have wished to see you ever since I heard of you, and now have some hopes I shall have my desire very soon. I can truly say, I have wept over you with tears of joy, and have felt something of that love which was between David and Jonathan ; even that love which shall abide when faith and hope shall cease. When we meet in the body, may it be for the glory of God, and the edification of our souls ! May we be joined together in the unity of the Spirit ! O, how did I rejoice over your letter, when expressing how near your soul approached Christ ! O, it was nigh to him indeed ! He came to comfort you ; he saw you weary and heavy laden, and came to give you rest. He has made you poor in spirit, and your's is the kingdom of heaven. He has given you to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and you shall be filled. The word of the Lord shall stand for ever. He will not break a bruised reed ; he will not quench the smoking flax. What shall I say ? The whole Bible is on your side ; there is not a word in it against you. Take it then, and read it to your comfort ; collect the promises together, and plead them with the Lord. He cannot deny his own word ; He is faithful who hath promised. May the Lord give you that faith which overcomes the world, and an assurance of his favour ! " &c.

Thriberg is about two or three miles from Rotherham, on the Doncaster road ; and between Rotherham and it a friendly intercourse was opened, in a Methodistical point of view, through the medium of Mr. Lowly's family and William Green, the latter of whom had now settled at Rotherham, where he taught school, opened his door for preaching, and visited the neighbouring places himself, as a local preacher. It appears from a manuscript book of William Green's, obligingly lent by his daughters, and from which have been obtained many valuable hints relative to dates and circumstances,

and in some instances solid information, that an intimacy took place between him and William Shent, of Leeds, a man often noticed in John Nelson's Journal, and before whose door John frequently preached in Leeds, but who, after bearing the heat and burthen of the day, fell into sin again. He was at this time zealous and devout; otherwise there would have been no intercourse between him and the pious Wm. Green. The latter was like a speckled bird in the place in which he lived; and the only persons to keep him in countenance, as Methodists, were two or three poor persons in Rotherham, and two men and their wives in Masbro',—a day, indeed, of small and feeble things.

As there was no regular preaching at the different places, the members of Society had to travel a considerable distance to hear the word. This was particularly the case when Mr. WESLEY was any way within reach. They crossed the country, in all directions, to give him the meeting at the nearest point. He was now, Feb. 21, on his way to the north, and says, “Wm. Holmes met us at Doncaster, and piloted us through the mire, and water, and snow, lately fallen, to Syke-house. Finding the congregation ready, I began preaching as soon as I came in, and exhorted them to follow after the gift of God. Several from Epworth met us here, and we rejoiced unto God with reverence.”* Mr. Richard Moss was with Mr. WESLEY, who went to him at first in the capacity of servant, and was left in the north during this journey, where, at Newcastle, he began to preach.† Mr. WESLEY returned by way of Sykehouse on the 16th of April, where he “preached to a little company‡,” proceeded into Lincolnshire, returned again to Syke-house, and, after taking a route by way of Leeds, Bradford, Lancashire, and Cheshire, came from Taddington, in the Peak of Derbyshire, to Sheffield, on the 29th of the same month. Here, says he, “I preached on the floor of the late house (which the good Protestant mob had just pulled down) to the largest and one of the quietest congregations I ever remember to have seen” in the town.|| The

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 269. † Ibid. p. 269; also Meth. Mag. 1792, p. 56, 57. ‡ Journals, vol. ii. p. 276. || Ibid. p. 281.

chapel, or “*house*,” as it is here called, and which was common in primitive times, was that which Mr. Edward Bennet was the instrument of raising, and from which, it should appear, the materials had been removed,—probably to be employed in the erection of its successor. Mr. WESLEY preached the next day at Barley Hall, and returned from thence to proceed to Nottingham.

Richard Moss, who had been left a few weeks at Newcastle by Mr. WESLEY, in consequence of the preacher in that neighbourhood accompanying the latter, now returned, and was hunted from place to place by persons who wished to press him for a soldier. He arrived at Syke-house on the 31st of May, and, after remaining there three days, was again obliged to travel for safety. The occasion of his departure from thence was rather singular, but providential. Mr. Holmes, of Sykehouse, dreamt that the constables and church-wardens came to press his guest for a soldier. On awaking, which was about three o'clock in the morning, he proceeded to the room of the slumbering pilgrim, and told him his dream, intimating that he could not help being persuaded, that something of the kind was on foot, and entreated him to rise and go to Norton. He accordingly rose, and was accompanied by his host about half a mile on the road. When Mr. Holmes returned, he found the constables and churchwardens at his house, inquiring, “Where is the preacher?” stating further, “The minister has ordered us to take all these preachers up, and send them away for soldiers.” Mr. Holmes replied, “I have just now sent him away; but you will see him in that day when God shall judge the world in righteousness.”

The hunted preacher went from Norton to Epworth, where he had another narrow escape through the evident interposition of Divine Providence. He reached Sheffield on Tuesday, June 11. But though he fled hither like a heron to her haunt, the hawks were still abroad; there was a good understanding among the enemies of Methodism in the different places. When speaking to some of the Society on the Wednesday evening, the constables and church-wardens entered the house, saying, they had a warrant to take him for a soldier. On deli-

vering their message, they instantly took hold of him, and dragged him down stairs, no one attempting any resistance. Mary, the wife of Edward Bennet, a member of the little Society, said, "Come, let us pray to God for him." She no sooner began her devout exercise, than immediately one of the most furious of the mob, who then held him, left off swearing, and exclaimed, "I shall have nothing to do in this matter." All the others were of the same mind; so they let him loose, and departed. On the Thursday, he gave an exhortation to a great company, both morning and evening, without molestation, and on the Friday left the town. He was afterwards ordained by the Bishop of London as a missionary for the island of Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, in the West Indies, where he preached the Gospel with success for several years, in connection with Mr. Tizzard, his fellow-labourer. In this employment he continued till he finished his course with joy.*

There was, in the course of this year,—a period distinguished by the Scotch Rebellion,—a great want of soldiers; and the persecutors of the Methodists shielded themselves under the plea of necessity in some instances. The King's troops, to whom Mr. Wm. Woodhouse, of Hallam, carried straw for the accommodation of the horses, were encamped on Doncaster moor; and in proportion as the report spread, of the approach of the rebels, the people were engaged in concealing their pewter dishes, plate, and other valuables. In this employment Mr. Woodhouse found his parents on reaching home. The description which Mr. WESLEY gives of the morals of the military is truly lamentable, October 10th, says he, "We dined at Ferrybridge, where we were conducted to General Wentworth, who did us the honour to read over all the letters we had about us. We lay at Doncaster, nothing pleased with the drunken, cursing, swearing soldiers who surrounded us on every side."† Monday, the 14th, he came to Sheffield, and was perfectly at a loss what to do with the congregation.

* Meth. Mag. 1798, pp. 57—59; also, Mr. Wesley's Journals, vol. ii. pp. 302, 3.

† Journals, vol. ii. p. 313.

The people stood above stairs, and below, and in the yard; but still there was not room. Here he tarried over the Tuesday, on which day he wrote the tract, entitled, "A Word in Season, or, Advice to an Englishman." The next morning he preached at Barley Hall, which place was also visited by Richard Moss in the month of June, and then proceeded to the north again, where he found Mr. Tremboth labouring in Newcastle.* The alarm which was spread throughout the kingdom had a good influence on the minds of some of the people. The approach of the rebels produced serious thought; but the preachers met with many interruptions from the watchmen, posted at the end of almost every village, and on the different roads, while travelling from place to place. December 18th was the day appointed for a National Fast, and on that very day the Duke's army was remarkably preserved in the midst of the ambuscades at Clifton Moor.

1746. While a few were brought to serious reflection, others were disposed for every sort of wanton mischief; an instance of which occurred in the early part of the year following. Mr. Hunter, in his "History of Sheffield and Hallamshire," speaks of two Methodist Chapels which were pulled down by the mob, and which have been already alluded to; the one characterized as Mr. Edward Bennet's, and the other Mr. John Wilson's. The latter, like the former, he barely notices, only with this difference, that no date is fixed for its demolition.† Fortunately an unpublished document was found by the writer, when examining the papers of Mr. Green, that enters into the particulars, an exact copy of which is as follows:—

"On Monday, the 9th of Feb. 1746, about six o'clock in the evening, a great number of persons, to the amount of four or five hundred, assembled themselves together in a riotous and tumultuous manner at Sheffield, and riotously and tumultuously began to pull down a dwelling-house in Sheffield, near the New Church yard, belonging to John Wilson, of Sheffield aforesaid, and

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 314.

† Hallamshire, p. 171.

then in the occupation of Henry Alsop, as tenant thereof; and continued such riot and tumult every night from thence to Saturday night after inclusive, during which time they quite pulled down all the said house.

“ On the Tuesday night the proclamation appointed in the 1st of Geo. I. was read to the rioters by a constable for Sheffield, two constables being present for that purpose (there being no justice of the peace in town); but the rioters did not disperse themselves upon it, or take any notice of it, but fell to work afresh in pulling the house down. Upon this, the said John Wilson applied to two justices of the peace in the neighbourhood for a warrant against some of the rioters, but they declined granting such warrant, or to act therein.

“ What is the best method for the said John Wilson to take in this case? If he prosecute any of the rioters by indictment upon the statute, whether will such prosecution be any prejudice to him in an action against the hundred for damages or not?

“ This is a capital offence within the statute of the 1st of Geo. I., although the proclamation was not made by the proper officer, by a subsequent independent clause of the same act, whereby all persons riotously assembled to the disturbance of the peace, who shall demolish or pull down, or begin to demolish or pull down, any dwelling-house, barn, stable, or other out-houses, are adjudged felons, and to suffer death as in the case of felony, without benefit of the clergy. As this is a crime of so high a nature, Mr. Wilson ought to apply to some justice of the peace that acts for the division, and have the parishes taken up and committed to the Castle of York, which will save the prosecutor both the expense and trouble of two attendances at the Assizes, as the indictment-trial, in case they are in custody, may be at the same Assizes: besides, it will seem extremely negligent in the prosecutor to the grand jury and court, to let offenders, guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, go at large unmolested; and it is not to be supposed that any justice of the peace will refuse an information, or to grant his warrant to apprehend a felon.

“ The prosecution of the offenders will be no bar or hindrance to the said John Wilson or his lessee’s action

against any of two or more of the inhabitants of the hundred for damages sustained by the demolishing or pulling down of the said house, which action the said statute gives the sufferer, and authorises to make any and such of the hundred defendants, as to him shall seem proper.

“ Mar. 11, 1746.

RICHD. WILSON.”

The above, which contains the opinion and advice of a professional gentleman, shews the spirit of both the mob and the magistracy at the time,—the one in injuring their peaceable neighbours, and the other in encouraging them by refusing to grant redress. Though the building is styled a “dwelling-house,” yet it is the “chapel” referred to by Mr. Hunter. The fact is, it served the two-fold purpose of a chapel and a dwelling, and, like the rest of the original places of worship among the Methodists, was called a “preaching-house”—a term to which Mr. WESLEY was very partial, and which he advised the preachers to apply to places entirely appropriated to the public worship of God among the Methodists.* The place in question was intended originally for the accommodation of the Methodists, but was built in the form of a dwelling-house, and, for its better security, was inhabited by Henry Alsop.

Mr. John Nelson conversed with an old female member of Society, in 1798, who was in the building when the mob attempted to pull it down, and narrowly escaped from the utmost peril in which she had been placed through them. What may be read with still greater interest, so recent as Oct. 30th, 1821, the writer conversed with an old man, Thomas Britner, aged 91, long in the employ of Messrs. S. & C. Younge, silver and plated manufacturers, Sheffield, who was present at the demolition of both this and the preaching-house in 1743. This old man was a member of the Church of England, and had long enjoyed the consolation of true religion. He, like old G. Wainwright and W. Woodhouse, died soon after he communicated the information—in the space of eight

* Minutes, vol. ii. p. 41.

or ten days. He was visited in his last illness by the Rev. Thomas Cotterill, perpetual curate of St. Paul's, who expressed himself to a friend as highly pleased with the Christian frame of mind in which he found the departing saint. This must have been a personal gratification to Mr. C., as it was under his enlightened ministry, that T. Britner was wont to sit with great delight.

Mr. WESLEY visited Sheffield on the 20th of the month, nine days after the above instrument was drawn up. What was his advice on the occasion cannot be ascertained, though very likely to prosecute, since damages were obtained for the dwelling, but not the preaching-house, because not licensed; but there is another circumstance which he has recorded, and which cannot fail to be interesting. "I rode," says he, "by Barley Hall to Sheffield. I was glad of having an opportunity here of talking with a child I had heard of. She was convinced of sin some weeks before by the words of her elder brother (about eight years of age), dying at a hundred years old, in the full triumph of faith. I asked her abruptly, 'Do you love God?' She said, 'Yes, I do love him with all my heart.' I said, 'Why do you love Him?' She answered, 'Because He *has* saved me.' I asked, 'How has he saved you?' She replied, 'He has taken away my sins.' I said, 'How do you know that?' She answered, 'He told me himself on Saturday, Thy sins are forgiven thee; and I believe Him; and I pray to Him without a book. I was afraid to die; but now I am not afraid to die; for if I die, I shall go to Him.' "†

Sheffield was visited by Mr. CHARLES WESLEY, also, in the course of the year. He took his stand out of doors, on a Sabbath morning, on Sheffield moor. A person of the name of Oxley, brother to a butcher of that name, disturbed the congregation very much; so much so as to attract the attention of Mr. WESLEY, who spoke to him in a pointed manner. On receiving the rebuke, he was still more outrageous in his conduct, and declared if he could get to the preacher, he would send his knife into his breast. "Mr. WESLEY," said Mr. S. Birks, who was present, "threw open his waistcoat, saying to

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 336.

the people, ‘ Make way, make way for that Rabshakeh, and let him come up !’ but the people stood wedged together, and no further violence was offered.” During the last prayer, Mr. WESLEY prayed very fervently for him, that the Lord would convert his soul, and thus turn him from the error of his ways.

God, who is rich in mercy, seemed to heap his blessings on the heads of the persecuted this year, by sending his principal servants to bear up their hands. Mr. G. Whitfield either followed, or struck in between Mr. JOHN and Mr. CHARLES WESLEY. He, too, took his stand on Sheffield moor. One of our old members, Marshall Thorpe, of Hallam, was present on the occasion ; but such was the immense concourse of people, that he could not get near the preacher, and could only hear him repeating, with great energy, in different parts of his sermon, which he concluded to be his text, “ Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel.” This old man was born Oct. 27, 1730, and could see to read without the aid of glasses in 1821. Mr. Hanwell, who accompanied the writer in two or three of his excursions, visited him, April 11, 1821, when several interesting facts were obtained. The venerable worthy died about ten months afterwards ; and death, in putting in the sickle, found him like a shock of corn, fully ripe for the garner of God. He heard Mr. Wm. Alwood preach at Bradwell, in Derbyshire, in 1753 ; was convinced of the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; and joined the Methodist Society in Hallam, 1761, when Mr. Tizzard was in the neighbourhood, and when there were only about twelve members in Society at Hallam.

It was some time in the course of this year, that Elizabeth Booth became acquainted with experimental religion, and led the way to another favourite Methodist station, namely, Woodseats, about three miles south of Sheffield,—a place frequently visited by Mr. WESLEY, and whose chief importance consisted in being a kind of retreat from the violence of persecutors in more populous places, and a constant home for the preachers. She was born in the year 1725 ; her maiden name was Wood, and she was the daughter of Stephen and Isabella

Wood, of Summerly, near Dronfield, Derbyshire. She was the subject of serious impressions from her childhood, and regularly attended the service of the Established Church at Norton. Her impressions were deepened under the ministry of David Taylor; but it was not till the year of her marriage to Mr. Jonathan Booth, of Norton Woodseats, Derbyshire, who had a small farm there, that she possessed the consolations of religion, which was about the eighteenth of her age. The opposition which she first met with from her husband, who, through the persuasion of his relatives, threatened to turn her out of doors, was considerable. Though she brought him a fortune, he would not, on the testimony of a daughter, suffer her to have a halfpenny in her possession to his knowlege, and she frequently contributed to her class by the saving of a farthing at a time. She generally attended preaching at Sheffield at five o'clock in the morning, carrying the child in her arms that she was then nursing. Through her perseverance and exemplary conduct she at length so won upon him, as to suffer preaching to be established in the house; and through some severe affliction in the family, he was brought to serious reflection, and lived in the fear and love of God several years. She led a class in the neighbourhood, attended the different prayer-meetings which were established in the villages and hamlets around, and often gave a word of exhortation. In many of her religious excursions she went as far as Totley, Highlane, Penistone, and Staincross, the last of which places is about eighteen miles from Woodseats, and there prayed with the people, and there spake to them as she was able. Her house was the grand resort of all the first preachers, as the Messrs. WESLEY, Whitfield, Grimshaw, Nelson, and others; and among pious females, Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, Mrs. Crosby and Miss Hosmer, of Leeds. Whenever Mr. WESLEY visited Woodseats during the summer season, he almost invariably went to the brook, now called the London river, near Heeley, and bathed himself,—a recreation conducive to health, and to which he was very partial.

Norton, near Woodseats, was one of those places in which several early attempts were made to form a Soci-



WOODSKEATS, NEAR SHEFFIELD



ety. Two of the first members were Hannah Bramley and Dorothy Bingham, both of whom died in peace at a good old age—one of them betwixt 90 and a 100. There seems to be a striking coincidence, in many cases, between the introduction and reception of Christianity and Methodism in various places;—females distinguishing themselves among its first embracers, and, by the influence of their conversation and example, among the first of its propagators.

CHAP. V.

The copy of a curious letter sent to the Archbishop of York—Part of Miss Lowly's correspondence—Local preachers—An instance of Mr. Wesley's extraordinary labours—Anecdote of David Taylor—Distribution of religious tracts—Mr. Grimshaw visits the neighbourhood—Death of Mr. Holmes, of Syke-house—Some account of George Story—Mr. Wesley preaches—Sheffield becomes the head of a circuit—Grace Bennet.

1746. WHILE agents of good were on the increase, the agents of evil were far from slumbering on their arms. Open violence had been resorted to; the Established pulpits in Sheffield had been employed as vehicles of abuse; and the Magistrates had been induced to wink at the proceedings of the rioters. More effective measures became necessary, and the direct aid of still higher powers was solicited. But fraud, instead of force, was now to be employed. The following singular document, which shews the malice of the persecutors, and the reports of the day, was found in Rotherham church-yard, by one of Wm. Green's scholars, and laid, it is supposed, purposely in his way, that he might convey it to his master:—

“ My Lord,

“ In this parish, (although very extensive) we have not ten Roman Catholic families: but, my Lord, I am sorry to say, we have a considerable number of Methodists. These people owe their rise in this neighbourhood to one Lowly, late a dish-turner, and an inhabitant of Abberford, near Pontefract, who, for many years of his life, has been an avowed Papist. This man, by some means or other, was, about the year 1741, made steward to Mrs. Finch, of Thryborough, where he now lives, which employ has given him that influence, espe-

cially over the poorer sort of tenants belonging to this opulent lady, as to enable him but too successfully to corrupt the minds of the ignorant and unwary, and to seduce them from the Church. There are weekly meetings established in several parts of this parish, which occasion much disturbance, on account of the impious doctrines inculcated by the itinerant teachers of this sect, who, for the most part, are mechanics. One of these fellows, at two different meetings, which he held at Rotherham, in January last, declared to his audience, that God the Father had no power to remit the sins of men, no more power than he, the teacher, had. Of the truth of this blasphemous assertion, we have undoubted evidence. Others again openly vindicate the doctrine of transubstantiation, infallibility, with several other tenets of the Church of Rome. These proceedings, together with the unhappy differences and divisions they have made in several families, in and about Rotherham, makes it much to be wished, that some effectual method might be found out to suppress so dangerous a people, who glory in violating the laws both of Church and State."

This precious specimen of ignorance, bigotry, and spleen has been fortunately preserved among William Green's MSS., and is now presented to the Methodist public. It is possible, some may be almost led to doubt, that it is an exact copy of what Mr. Cleator, the clergyman, sent to the Archbishop of York, in answer to the queries prior to the visitation; but it is too well authenticated. This, in the estimation of its author, was, in its effects, to shake the whole system of Methodism; but it survived misrepresentation, as it had towered above the tempest raised by the spirit of persecution.

Mr. Lowly still maintained his integrity and his office; and his family attended to their improvement in piety. Miss Margaret Lowly, in a letter to her sister, dated October 26, 1746, says, "I hope your journey to London was to your satisfaction, and much blessed to your soul. I should have been glad to have been a partaker with you, of hearing the word, and conversing with the children of God. On the reception of your

letter, we were in the very act of rejoicing at the supposition of your hearing Mr. WESLEY, and of your receiving comfort, by the Spirit of God applying the word to your soul. O, consider how great the love of God is, lest ye grow weary and faint in your mind. I have many trials and temptations, but, through the mercy of God, I faint not; having this promise, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God." After many pious remarks, she then proceeds to comment on an observation of her sister. " You say, you have almost given over talking to people. Now, as this is a talent, which God has given you, O hide it not in the earth, for thereby you deprive both yourself and others of a blessing; for while we are talking of Him whom we love, does it not increase our love and strength? And though you do not see good done as yet, have faith in God. Cast your bread upon the waters, and it will return to you after many days; for who can tell what good it may do to their poor souls? And again, for our own parts, it is in some measure following the example of our Lord, who went about doing good. The poor man whom you mention has only two children, and they are very little ones; nor do I know of any other. I think it would be better for you to board somewhere. You would be more comfortable in your mind, and free from trouble. Mr. Trembath, if you recollect, gave you directions to a person at Bath, with whom you might board, and where you might have an opportunity of hearing the word preached, which would be rendered a great blessing to your soul. When I heard Miss Dodson was in Yorkshire, I went to Treeton to see her, but she was gone. May the peace of God rule in all our hearts!" &c. While this letter shews the devout frame of mind in which Miss Lowly was, it informs us that Mr. Trembath was either then, or had recently been labouring in the neighbourhood.

1747. An intimacy had taken place between Miss Margaret Lowly and a son of Mr. Johnson, of Barley Hall; and they were married in 1747. The bride was born December 2, 1719, and the bridegroom September 20, 1719. On their marriage they went to reside at Hoyland, where they opened their door for preaching.

From these, the present Barlows of Sheffield sprung, their mother, the late Mrs. James Barlow, being daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of Hoyland, and granddaughter to the Johnsons of Barley Hall. Methodism, therefore, from the first, seems to have been hereditary in the family. It was not long after the union of Miss Lowly and Mr. Johnson, that the officiating clergyman of Wentworth was pleased to propagate a report which had been invented by the malevolent. The Marchioness of Rockingham, who highly respected the family, made it her business to inquire into its credibility ; and finding it false, her ladyship embraced the first opportunity of rebuking his reverence for the part which he took in it. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were capable of living down every report incompatible with Christianity. Their hearts were open to admit the truth, and their house was always open to its ministers. It was at their house, that John Nelson was confined some time, when ill of an intermitting fever. On the day that he was free from an attack, he sent Mr. Johnson's servants to invite the people in the neighbourhood to the house, and preached to them.

As the preachers, whose province it was to labour in what was called the “Leeds round,” at this period, preached also at Sheffield, it is very likely that Mr. Christopher Hopper visited these parts. He preached at Birstal, where as yet there was no “preaching-house.”*

Persons, who, at this early period, acted in the capacity of local preachers, were in the habit of taking very long journeys, for the purpose of preaching the gospel. One of these men, was Wm. Nelson, brother to John Nelson, who was an instrument of great good, and under whom Mr. James North, of Rothwell, a local preacher about half a century, and who had a daughter resident in Sheffield, was awakened to a sense of his lost moral condition.† After Wm. Nelson had laboured in these parts some time, he, according to the statement of the present John Nelson, grandson of his brother John, went to the Isle of Portland, where he

* Meth. Mag. 1802, p. 396.

† Ibid. 1800, p. 197—201.

settled, and where it is feared he lost his religion: at least, he became lost to the family. Mr. North, however, supplied his lack of service, and frequently preached in Sheffield and the neighbourhood. This veteran died suddenly, in 1799, at Wakefield, where his daughter, Mrs. Froggatt, Eyre-street, Sheffield, had gone to meet him.* While Wm. Nelson preached in these parts, he was useful. And had it not been for him, his brother John, Wm. Green, John Thorpe, and a few others, the places where Methodism was introduced, would have been but ill supplied. Relative to those who were entirely given up to the work, it might be demanded, “What are these among so many—so many places that have claims upon their time, their talents, and their exertions?” And Mr. WESLEY’s circuit was too extensive to admit of more than one or two visits in the year; and sometimes not so many.

Thus, he omitted Sheffield on his way to the north this year, in the month of February, but called at Sykehouse, where he was “not a little comforted,” and was met by Wm. Shent.† On his return, however, after taking a circuitous route, he preached, May 13, at noon, in the High Peak of Derbyshire, “and in the evening at Sheffield;” from whence, May 14, he rode to Barley Hall. As soon as he had done preaching at the latter place, Wm. Shent told him he had just left Leeds, where Mr. Perronet was in a high fever. Mr. WESLEY set off for Leeds at three the next morning, at which place he arrived between seven and eight; and through the blessing of God on the means employed, Mr. Perronet recovered from that hour. Mr. WESLEY being willing to redeem the time, preached at noon in Leeds, and then hastened back to Barley Hall, where he preached at seven, on “Glorify God with your bodies and your spirits, which are God’s.” Exclusive of preaching, walking, and other engagements, he had not less than 50 miles to ride on horseback: yet, abundant in his labours, he was seen the next day mounted again, passing through Sheffield, Chesterfield, Mansfield, Not-

* Meth. Mag. 1800, p. 197—201.

† Journals, vol. ii. p. 379.

tingham, and forward to Markfield*, scattering his conversational blessings as he went along.

Notwithstanding a pretty full account has been given of David Taylor, he, in common with others, of whom an opportunity is embraced to furnish a brief history, at one view, will make his occasional appearance. He still itinerated, as will appear from what has been observed, though not now among the Methodists. In addition to his being benighted on the moors, near Bradfield, when alone, he met with a similar fate, in company with another person, on the mountains of Edale, near Castleton, in Derbyshire. It was in the depth of winter, and while the snow was falling very thick around them. After experiencing considerable fatigue and anxiety, they reached a house, knocked at the door, obtained admission, and began to shake the snow off their clothes. The man of the house expecting a neighbour, was both surprised and alarmed on seeing two strangers enter with some degree of freedom; and immediately took down his sword, which hung over the fire-place, among other armour, which had been employed by him as a train-band soldier, in the battle of Preston Pans, in 1745. With this weapon, he purposed to defend himself and his family, from men of whom he was apprehensive as being influenced by evil intentions. His fears were soon silenced by David stepping up to him, and saluting him with—"Peace be to this house." He found no need of his martial spirit; and being a man that feared God, he laid aside the soldier and took up the Christian; shook David heartily by the hand, and bid him welcome. His name was Joseph Hadfield. This is noticed as connected with the introduction of Methodism into Edale; for the Methodist preachers succeeded David, who often acted as a pioneer, and there has been preaching in the place, either less or more, ever since. While it may please some to know, it can give offence to no one, to observe, that in this very house, Mr. James Ridel, an old travelling preacher, was afterwards born and brought up. There is now a Methodist Chapel in Edale.

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 392.

Oral instruction was not the only means employed by the first Methodists to awaken the attention of the public to the importance of experimental and practical piety. So early as 1745, we find several thousands of little tracts distributed among the common people, in the course of one day, in the metropolis, by Mr. WESLEY.* These messengers of mercy were widely circulated in this neighbourhood. Wm. Green, of Rotherham, had a book account opened with Mr. WESLEY in the former part of this year; and from some leaves having been torn out of the Memorandum book, it should seem, that an account had been opened much earlier. Down to the year 1779, there is a particular statement of all the books received from London; many of the parcels large, one weighing not less than 40 stone. Some of the tracts noted in the list for 1747, are "A Word of Advice to Saints and Sinners," 100 copies at a penny each; "Swear not at all," 40 copies at the rate of three for a penny; "Remember the Sabbath," price one half-penny; "Advice to a Methodist," one penny; "The Christian's Pattern," abridged; Mr. Grimshaw's Answer to a Sermon, published by Mr. White, which appeared for the first time before the public, and identified its author with the Methodist body, who, in the course of this year, was heartily united to Mr. WESLEY†. There are also other works, such as Law's "Serious Call," "Gloria Patriæ," &c. &c. calculated either to promote internal piety or the public worship of God. But there is another small publication, which appears to have had considerable circulation,—a publication which is now scarcely known in Methodism, and a copy of which never fell in the writer's way, viz. "Letters, by the Rev. CHARLES WESLEY." Whether these Letters were simply didactic, or whether they were controversial, is not for the writer to say. The selling price was threepence. There are a few particulars which force themselves upon us, when we view the subject generally. We see, 1. The vices most prevalent, from the nature of the tracts circulated, such as swearing, sabbath-breaking, &c. 2. The class of people to whom

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 328.

† Myles' Life of Grimshaw, p. 19.

Mr. WESLEY chiefly directed his attention, for the purpose of benefiting—the poor, the tracts being published in a cheap form to meet their circumstances. 3. Mr. WESLEY's anxious solicitude to preserve those whom he had gathered out of the world, in his advice to "Saints," and to a "Methodist." 4. His delight in promoting the harmony of the temple, in the music which he published. The distribution of these tracts, at a small price, answered all the purposes of the *Religious Tract Societies* now established, and it is creditable to the Methodists to have led the way.

Mr. Grimshaw, whose work has just been noticed, and who was united with the Methodists as far as a clergyman could be, now began to itinerate, and very often preached at High Green, about a mile from Thorncliffe. In addition to the services of his own church, at Howarth, and pastoral attention to his flock at home, he embraced the opportunity of preaching about 300 sermons annually to other congregations. He established two circuits, and Green Hill appears to have been in one of them. These circuits he visited, with only a few exceptions, once a fortnight, or every week alternately. One of these weeks, in which he seldom preached less than twelve or fourteen times, he pleasantly designated his idle week. His sermons, on his busy or laborious week, often exceeded twenty-four, and sometimes amounted to thirty.* His constitution was good, his spirit fervent, his piety deep, and in the discharge of his clerical functions he was "in labours more abundant." The inhabitants of Howarth were afflicted, in 1763, with a putrid fever, which he caught in visiting his parishioners, and of which he died, April 7, the same spring, in the 55th year of his age, in great peace. Some intimations have been given, of his having visited Woodseats, as well as High Green; but perfect confidence can scarcely be reposed in them. It is not to be supposed, however, that a man of his zeal would travel so far from home, and regularly preach in a mere hamlet, for a succession

* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 10, 11.

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* Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 10, 11.

of years, about seven miles from Sheffield, without once entering the town to proclaim the gospel.

Previously to Mr. Grimshaw's coming to High Green, the way had been prepared by David Taylor and John Nelson, both of whom had preached there in 1745, if not earlier. The number in society is uncertain, but supposed not to be more than ten or twelve. The person who entertained the preachers, as already noticed, was one Mr. Joseph Smith, a farmer. He afterwards removed from thence, and left his son William in possession of the farm. Some time after this, William, together with some of the members, embraced Calvinistic sentiments, and introduced no small degree of confusion into the society; but the final stroke appears to have been given, by William marrying a female opposed to religion; in consequence of which, he abandoned his own religious profession, and again became a man of the world. Preaching was discontinued by the Methodists, and the little society was dispersed some time about the year 1765, two years after Mr. Grimshaw's death.

From the infancy of the work, there had scarcely, in the regular course of nature, been time for the different societies to sustain much loss through deaths. There were only a few occasional removals. John Nelson records one, in a letter to Mr. WESLEY, which was severely felt, and another only remarkable for connecting circumstances. "I heard nothing," says he, "of Brother Holmes's death, till I got to Norton. I believe God hath done more by him in his death than in all his life. I never saw the people at Syke-house so earnest. I preached at Norton, and there seems to be a revival there also; the death of Mr. Holmes hath stirred them also. He died a great witness for God. We have a great awakening in this place, too, occasioned by the death of an old gentleman, that was concerned in sending me for a soldier. About two months before he died, he sent for me, and I spake plain to him: he trembled and wept bitterly, and desired me to come again; and I found him under as great conviction as I ever saw a man. After my third visit he told me, God had visited him in great love. He continued to praise God, and

seemed sanctified in body, soul, and spirit. He desired me to preach over him: I did, and God laid his hand upon many that had been enemies before.* What a triumph for Christianity! How eminently was good returned for evil!

Of Mr. Holmes, whose death John Nelson simply notices, it may be proper to say a little more. He was a branch of an ancient family, whose ancestors came from Normandy with William the Conqueror. The oldest branch of it, (now nearly extinct,) enjoy considerable estates in Holderness, which were granted to them by that prince. Mr. Holmes was a respectable farmer, and joined the Methodist society some time about the year 1740. He was a zealous local preacher, and was an active agent in promoting the interests of that gospel, which he had experienced to be the power of God to his own salvation. He endured great persecution for the testimony of a good conscience. On one occasion he was confined in the stocks, and on another sent on board of a tender at Grimsby. He was a burning and shining light; but his life was short, and, for its brevity, was like the meteor shooting along the face of the heavens, giving light indeed, but suddenly disappearing. His death, which possessed more of triumph than composure, was occasioned by a cold which he caught while in the exercise of his ministerial labours. He left a widow and four children; but the Lord was a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow. The loss sustained by the children in the death of the father, was, in a great degree, compensated by the excellencies of the mother. She was a woman of genuine piety of heart, of singular propriety of conduct, and of the most active industry in her domestic concerns. She continued to receive the preachers into her house, and God graciously blessed their prayers, advice, and example to the family. She lived a widow thirty years, and then died happy in the Lord. Mr. Robert Holmes, the eldest son, became serious at a very early period in life, and sustained the respective offices of class-leader, trustee, and circuit-steward, with credit to himself and use-

* Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 530.

fulness to the society. He died April 13, 1810; and his death, as his life, was attended with all that characterizes the Christian. March 12, he sat down with an intention to write some letters of instruction and advice to his children, but before he had completed one letter, he had occasion to go out on some business, when his foot slipped, he fell down, and broke his leg. It proved a compound fracture: and in consequence of a bilious complaint, he had been previously brought very low, and his nervous system was much shaken; but grace was given for the day. When he was interrogated on the state of his mind, he said, "I am a sinner saved by grace; I rest in Christ Jesus; *there is support and comfort only in Him.*" He took Mr. Laycock by the hand, who was the person that spoke to him, and kissed it several times, and said, "You see I am an *old man*, I must *die*;" further observing, "Jesus is my refuge. *All is well.*"* The Methodist preachers have now been kindly entertained by the family, *free of all expense*, upwards of *eighty* years, and still continue to visit them. Indulging a faint hope, that some memorials of the work of God might be preserved in the family, inquiry was made, and the following note was received:—

"Sir,

"I have made inquiry in the family, but cannot meet with any letters or papers from either Mr. WESLEY, John Nelson, or any of the old preachers; nor any facts relative to the introduction of Methodism to Syke-house.

"Your's respectfully,

"PAUL HOLMES."

"Syke-house, July 18, 1821."

1748. Several places were visited by the preachers in the immediate neighbourhood of Sheffield, which, after trying for a considerable time, they were obliged to abandon for a season. Ecclesfield was one of them, which had preaching in 1748, and where great opposition was raised. Than Ecclesfield, few places stood more in need, not only of evangelizing, but of civilizing.

* Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 626, 627.

Bear-beatings, and other brutal amusements were common both during the week and on the Lord's day. After having been engaged once the greater part of the Sabbath in this work, the animal broke loose, and entered a house where a female had been recently confined. The infuriated creature tore the breasts of the mother, and killed the infant by her side, the mother herself dying of the wounds soon after. This dreadful catastrophe put a check to the practice for a season; but still the village was deemed the Sodom of all the neighbouring places. A happy moral change has taken place principally through the instrumentality of the Methodists; and religion is prospering both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters. In addition to the Parish Church, the Methodists and Independents have each a chapel. At the time alluded to, partly through persecution, and partly from a want of ministerial fruit, the preachers withdrew their labours several years. But though prospects bore rather a sombre tinge in some parts, some tints of light relieved the scene in others.

Mr. George Story, who was born at Harthill, a few miles from Sheffield, in the year 1738, and was now in the 10th year of his age, observes, "God began to revive his work of grace in and about Sheffield; the rumour of which spread into our village, and occasioned serious reflections in the minds of many. One evening, as I was hearkening to the conversation of my parents on that subject, I was struck with an observation they made, That prayer was nothing, unless the mind was stayed upon God. At night, when I repeated my customary prayers, I watched my thoughts narrowly, and soon found that they wandered from the Lord all the time. This discovery deeply affected me; I strove with all my might to think on God as being present, seeing and hearing me; and after repeated efforts, through grace, I prevailed." After noticing his attention to his Bible, a book which he had read several times through, before he was six years of age, and his observance of the Establishment, he continues, "I endeavoured to cast my soul upon the Lord in the best manner I was able, and at times was persuaded he had forgiven all my

trespasses. Though I had never heard any of the Methodist preachers, yet from that time I felt an esteem for them; and notwithstanding they were loaded with all manner of reproach, and represented in the most detestable light, these calumnies only increased my regard for them, because I understood, (having read, previous to this, the History of the Sufferings of the Protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, and other works,) that true Christians, in all former ages, had met with the same treatment from the world.* It should seem from hence, that, though the members of Society were calumniated, the work of God still prospered: and this is characteristic of the Church of God in every place; the more she is oppressed, the more she flourishes.

Friday, July 1, Mr. WESLEY remarks, "I rode to Sheffield, and preached in the evening, at the end of the house, to a quiet congregation:" and further observes, on the 8th, "About noon I preached at Sykehouse: the little society here also seemed to partake of the general revival."† The united testimony of Mr. Story and Mr. WESLEY, on the subject of the revival, is pleasing; and it must have been attended with some striking circumstances, to become the subject of general conversation.

1749. It was not till 1749, that Sheffield was considered a circuit town, or more properly, the head of a circuit.‡ The revival just noticed, might possibly lead to it; for it is natural to suppose, as the work extended, greater attention would be paid to the places. When Sheffield was thus considered a central station, there were only *twenty* circuits in England. Prior to this, it was in the Leeds circuit, from whence the preachers came, and stopped a short time, visiting the adjacent places. We are not to associate, however, with Sheffield, the modern comforts of a circuit town, in the early stages of Methodism. In the highly instructive and interesting memoir of Mr. C. Hopper, it is observed, "In those days, we had no provision made for preachers' wives, no funds, no stewards. He that had a staff,

* Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 14, 15, 16, 17; in a memoir of him, written by himself. † Journals, vol. ii. p. 443, 445. ‡ Minutes of Conf. vol. i. p. 40. 8vo. edit.

might take it, go without, or stay at home."* The preacher then, as in a small country place now, took up his residence with some of the friends in Sheffield, where he only tarried a few days. Indeed, some years after this, the *letters* were not, as now, directed to the preacher at the "Methodist Chapel," but to the care of some of the principal friends, as "Mr. Wainwright," or "Mr. J. Rider, Fargate," or to be left "at the Rev. J. WESLEY's Lodgings, Sheffield." We must associate with the joys of Sheffield, therefore, as the head of a circuit, what is experienced by an army, when, during march, they are favoured with a "halt-day." There was a short pause from travelling; but it was a rest accompanied with pulpit exertion, and soon succeeded by long and painful journeys.

Though there were both Band and Class Meetings in Sheffield several years prior to this, it is difficult to ascertain where they were held. One of the classes, in 1749, met in a house at the bottom of Silver-street, No. 2, now in the occupation of the daughter and son-in-law of Luke and Lydia Staniforth, of which class Luke and Lydia were the first members, and in which house they lived and died—died full of years, and ripe with religious fruit. Thomas Colley, who united with the society of Friends, and became an eminent speaker among them, and whose descendants are now with that religious body, was afterwards the leader. John Butler, Henry Alsop, and Robert Glover were members of Society at the time, and probably of the class.

Considerable as had been the revival the year preceding, Sheffield itself was not equally benefited by it with other places; nor were her privileges much increased. Mr. G. Story, who continued nearly in the state in which he was left in 1748, and looking back, in 1782, upon the present period of the history, in 1749, says, "The Methodists (in Sheffield) were few and feeble, and had seldom any travelling preachers: I sometimes attended their prayer-meetings, and often followed them up and down the town, hoping they would turn and speak to me; but no one took any notice of me."

* Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 90.

He continues, "One day hearing a preacher was to be there, I attended; but he did not come. Upon this, one of the local preachers, who was then a Calvinist, gave an exhortation."* This preacher broached some of the peculiarities of his creed, which tended not a little to unsettle the mind of his young auditor.

On Monday, Sept. 4th, Mr. WESLEY was at Sykehouse, where he stayed all night.† It was either during this visit, or that of the year preceding, when Mr. Saml. Birks gave Mr. WESLEY the meeting, and first saw Grace Murray. The life of this remarkable woman, which has been already referred to, as written by her son, is well worthy of perusal. She formed a conspicuous figure in the early part of Methodism. She was born in or near Newcastle-upon-Tyne, January 23d, 1715. Her maiden name was Norman. About the year 1736, she was married to Mr. Alexander Murray, nearly related to a considerable family of that name in Scotland. He died at sea, and left her a young widow. She was savingly converted to God about the 23rd year of her age; and was made a band and class-leader soon after by Mr. WESLEY. During her widowhood, she travelled, by Mr. WESLEY's direction, through several of the northern counties, to meet and regulate the female societies. She went over into Ireland for the same purpose, where she continued three or four months; and at her return thence, travelled from Bristol, through the southern and eastern counties, back to Newcastle; where, Oct. 3rd, 1749, she was married, in the parish-church of St. Andrew's, to Mr. John Bennet, the convert of David Taylor, in the presence of the Rev. George Whitfield and the Rev. CHARLES WESLEY.‡ We find Mr. Whitfield in the north about that time, and John Bennet seems to have left the north immediately after his marriage.§ Few characters were more esteemed throughout the whole of the Methodist connexion than Grace Murray, and in real usefulness equalled, in her sphere, most of the preachers. Mr. WESLEY was wont to call her his "right hand," and there is reason to believe that he intended

* Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 17, 18. † Journals, vol. iii. p. 6. ‡ See her Life. § Mr. Wesley's Journals, vol. iii, p. 14, 15, 16.

to have married her; but she was destined to move elsewhere. It is not improbable, that she was on her return from Ireland, when Mr. Samuel Birks was first introduced to her. She was in company with Mr. WESLEY, some of the preachers, and several friends. On the morning she left Syke-house, Mr. Birks was not a little surprised, at the manner of her exit. When she came to the side of the animal, and found, by a glance of the eye, every thing right, she laid her hand on his shoulders; that instant he dropped on his knees; she immediately mounted—the horse rose when she was fairly seated—she waved her hand—touched the rein—rode off—and suddenly disappeared—leaving those behind her, looking at each other in a state of astonishment.

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CHAP. VI.

Edward Perronet—Notes of admission—Conversion of Sarah Moore—The first Quarterly Meeting—Miss Holmes's marriage—Instances of the persecuting spirit and conduct manifested to Wm. Green—Wm. Darney—Place of preaching altered—Mr. Wesley preaches—A singular account of Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats—New ground broken up—Wm. Brammah begins to preach.

1749. ONE of the preachers who laboured here at this period, and whose name has been preserved through a note of admission into Society, was Mr. Edward Perronet. The note was written, from whence it may be inferred, that, either he was not in possession of a printed one, or that the press had not then been employed for that purpose. Its contents were, “ Thursday, Oct. 26, 1749, Soci. Admit Sarah Moore. Edwd Perrot.” with a private mark at one of the corners. Edward was brother to Charles Perronet, and possessed equal powers with him; to which was superadded a large fund of wit. He commenced his itinerant labours in 1747, and desisted for want of piety in 1778.* He resided at Canterbury, and there preached to a small congregation of Dissenters. Though the son of a clergyman, he is said to have been a notorious enemy to the hierarchy of the Church of England; and sometimes employed his pen in satirizing it. He was the author of an anonymous poem, entitled, “ The Mitre;” which is generally supposed to have been one of the keenest satires on the National Establishment that was ever written. It was printed, but the publication of it was suppressed; some suppose, through the influence, and at the request, of Mr. J. WESLEY. Edward Perronet died at Canterbury,

* Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 449; and Atmore's Meth. Mem. p 335.

about the year 1791. He was brought to a deeply serious and humble temper, during his last illness, and, through the mercy of God, died as he should have lived.

The young person whom he admitted into Society, was born in Lynn, in Norfolk, 1738, which place she left, with her parents, when four years of age. She was now in her 11th year. In the 17th year of her age she began to teach a school in Sheffield, residing with her mother; and in her 18th, she was appointed, as the first leader, to the first class in Hallam. Thither she walked from Sheffield during all sorts of weather, for the space of two years, when she delivered it up to Benjamin Kirkby, one of its first members, who was deemed by that time sufficiently established in grace to conduct it, and who gave full proof of his integrity and perseverance by leading it nearly forty years. Her daughter, (for Sarah was married to Samuel Knutton, in 1772,) who is housekeeper to Mr. Wardlow, of Fulwood, grandson to the gentleman who first took in David Taylor, takes no small pleasure in shewing to a friend, an old oak table, of an oval form, round which about six persons may sit, on which the first quarter-day dinner was served, and which afforded ample room for preachers, stewards, and leaders. This, though apparently trifling, shews us the day of small and feeble things; the vast contrast between the first quarterly meeting held in a private dwelling, in Fargate, and a quarterly meeting now held in Carver-street Vestry, composed of from sixty to eighty persons, and these persons but a small portion of the official characters, and occupying a still smaller portion of ground, when contrasted with the extent of the circuit in 1749. Some antiquaries have manifested a greater partiality to things of less value, and would not hesitate to request, that such an article might be deposited in Carver-street Vestry, to remind the members of the meeting of former times, and to be handed down to posterity as an heir-loom to the Methodist Quarterly Family. In this, the antiquary would be joined by many others, and by no one more than _____. The first quarterly meeting was held in the house of Sarah Moore; the time is uncertain, but probably sometime between 1756 and 1760.

Wm. Green, who had laboured hard to introduce Methodism into Rotherham, Thrybergh, Brinsworth, and other places, was equally solicitous to extend and establish it. In the case of Rotherham, where he resided, and taught a school, he found it difficult. His first wife, to whom he was married in 1740, and by whom he had four children, died June 26, 1747. Two of the children, who survived the mother, were put out to nurse; and to avoid all occasion of slander, with which the Methodists were plentifully bespattered, he had no female in the house. A few persons in Masbro' and Rotherham, not amounting to more than a dozen, having no convenience of their own for class-meeting and preaching, and wishful to unite in church-fellowship, advised him again to enter the marriage-state, that they might meet in his house for Christian communion. They directed his attention to Miss Jane Holmes, of Sheffield, who was well known to the whole of the little Societies around, which she visited for the purpose of hearing preaching, holding prayer-meetings, and declaring the goodness of God to her soul, and was held in the highest esteem for her prudent zeal and exemplary conduct. Wm. Green's heart had been somewhat inclined that way, and he spoke to her on the subject. For this she was not altogether prepared. She had fixed it in her mind, not to marry, that she might have greater liberty to see her friends in the country, whose salvation she laboured to promote. She saw too, that those females who had husbands, very often missed their way, either by too great a partiality to them, or by the indulgence of anxious care, and doubted whether the marriage-state would admit of the same piety to God as a single life. Above all, she was surprised, that a man of Wm. Green's acknowledged sanctity should think, as he was in part free, of encumbering himself again with domestic cares, and, as she highly esteemed him, felt sorry on his account. Two or three young men had, previous to this, sought to gain her affection, but without the smallest encouragement; especially one of the name of T. Radcliffe, a person of considerable connexions and expectations. The conversation of Wm. Green seemed to impress her mind. When she awoke

in the morning, it was present with her. She consulted the sacred records on the subject of marriage; poured out her soul to God in prayer for direction; and sought the advice of her band-mates, and of her mother, still inclining to a single life. She saw, that the Bible encouraged marriage both in a paradisaical and a Christian state; her mother, who wished her married, but from whom she anticipated the greatest opposition to Wm. Green, was perfectly passive; the Society, and especially her band-mates, both of whom could but ill spare her, as she was a class-leader, thought, as there was no regular preaching at Rotherham, that the Lord might intend her to move in a sphere of usefulness elsewhere; and her health, which had been in a precarious state, got more and more established. She suffered a year, however, to pass over, before she would communicate with him on the subject, or give him any encouragement, intimating that both should continue to make it matter of prayer to God. They corresponded by letter, except on the Lord's day, when, as he had been accustomed to do for want of preaching at Rotherham, he attended Sheffield. They were at length united in marriage, Dec. 27, 1749. On this, Mr. T. Radcliffe left Sheffield, and went to reside in the south. The prudence manifested on this occasion, as well as piety, for she added fasting to prayer, was characteristic of Mrs. Green's character through life, and is held up as an example to others.

She now entered upon a new scene; she left her dear friends at Sheffield, with whom she had long taken sweet counsel; much was expected from her, and she was not a little discouraged. But the Lord graciously visited her; preaching was established in the house, and sinners were converted to God.

This account, taken in substance from a MS., in Mrs. Green's own hand-writing, will enable us to correct an error which has found its way into the Minutes of Conference. In answer to a question in the Minutes of Nov. 16, 1749, relative to chapels, it is said, "Build, if possible, in the form of the Rotherham house."*

* Vol. i. p. 41.

There must either have been an error in the date, or the name of the place; for, from other written documents of Wm. Green's, who had the principal management of it, the old octagon preaching-house, which was the first, was not built till 1761, till which period there was preaching in Wm. Green's house or school. So far as Dec. 27, 1749, he was obliged to attend service at Sheffield, which would not have been the case, had there been a preaching-house in Rotherham. The preaching which Rotherham little society had, if indeed it may be called a Society previous to this period, was chiefly given them by the local preachers, the names of only two of whom have been preserved, viz. John Thorpe, and Wm. Green himself. William kept a horse for the purpose of riding to distant places on the Lord's day, and during the vacation of his school. In his accounts, he was very particular; and it appears from them, that his horse was in pretty full employ, with himself and others, in journeys to Eckington, Barley Hall, High Green, Syke-house, and even Epworth, in the course of the year. It should seem too, from the number of glaziers' bills, and the manner in which some of them are expressed, that, from 1747 to 1749, the mob had made very free with his windows. But he was one of those, whose whole conduct was a comment on, "None of these things move me."

1750. After his marriage to Miss Holmes, his house was the general resort of the pious, and the home of the preachers. His good wife and himself, made it their study to promote the interests of their fellow-creatures, and they may be properly denominated the Parents of the Rotherham Methodist Society. But in proportion as increasing exertions were made, persecution, the foulest blot on human nature, raged. Two or three instances shall suffice at the present period of the history. On one occasion, when the mob assembled, which was not unfrequently the case when he passed along the street, some of the most ferocious caught him by the hair, and dragged him through the most conspicuous parts of the town. A person of the name of Richard Robinson, who stood as a spectator, while the furious persecutors passed, said within himself, "There

must be something in religion, and in that man, which I possess not, that enables him to endure the whole with such lamb-like patience." Though Wm. Green experienced the pain, Robinson derived the advantage; for he was convinced, from the circumstance of his own want of personal piety, met soon after in William's class, and lived and died a worthy member of the Methodist Society.

He was assailed by his enemies on another occasion, and took shelter in the house of Mr. Valentine Radley, a currier, in Rotherham, who was also a member of Society, and subscribed £20 towards the erection of the chapel in 1761. The mob continued to increase in number and in violence, till, through their threatenings, Mr. Radley was obliged to shut up his shop-windows. The doors and windows were no sooner closed, than those on the outside began to force them open, and threatened if the owner did not send out the object of their vengeance, they would pull the house down. Mr. Radley was in a strait between two, the preservation of his property and the preservation of his friend. He knew that those without were able to force the doors and windows, that they were perfectly disposed to do it, and that they would do within doors what they wished to do in the streets, with the probability of additional injury to his own person. On the other hand, Wm. Green was unwilling that any one should sustain any loss through him, and having confidence that God was able to protect him, he ventured out. The situation of the door was suitable for the purpose, at least it appeared so to the writer when examined. There was a free passage through a part of the building from the back to the front part of the town. In this passage the door opened into the house, and here a few of the persons were collected, to whom he appears scarcely to have been known, while the ring-leaders were employed at the front of the house, with shop-windows and door. The house-door was opened, William stepped out in haste, exclaiming, with a hurried step, and in a hurried tone, " Make way, make way there." The people barely made him a passage to squeeze through, he was soon at the skirts of the crowd, and the cry was heard

by the most active, who themselves were hemmed in by spectators and others, "He is gone!" They immediately commenced the chase; but by running through the streets, lanes, and fields, he eluded their grasp.

The enemies of God, however, still kept their eye upon him, and embraced every opportunity of venting their rancour of spirit. It was not abroad barely, but at home, that he was the butt of their indignation. It was about the same time that they broke his windows, and forcibly entered his house. He, in the interim, had made his escape by the back-door. Supposing him to have made his debut thence, they followed him through the house, and searched the back part of the premises and the garden. From the situation of the place, and the watch they had kept, they knew that the only part for flight was the bottom of the garden, which, when examined, seeing that the river ran close past it, was highly improbable, if not impossible, unless he were dextrous at swimming. After many fruitless attempts to find him themselves, they at length procured some hounds to track him. The hounds actually went round and round the spot where he was concealed by the foliage, without manifesting the smallest signs of any thing being there, except vegetable life. It was finally concluded, that he had crossed the river, and they withdrew, in some measure gratified with the supposed drenching he had received. It is not surprising that he should maintain a kind of superstitious fondness for the principal tree, which, like the oak that preserved King Charles, sheltered him from the violence of his pursuers, and would never suffer it to be cut down. It was at no great distance from this period too, that Wm. Shent preached in Rotherham, and narrowly escaped being thrown into a draw-well, through the kindness of a gentleman of some respectability, who opened his door for him, into which he quietly slipped, and so was lost by the mob.

It may appear a little singular how, in the midst of so much opposition, Wm. Green was able to support a school. This is explained, when it is known, that his persecutors were chiefly the most profligate part of the poor, who had neither disposition nor ability to give

their children a proper education ; and that among the higher and middling classes of people, there were many, who, though not favourable to his religion, were partial to him as a teacher of youth. He had a happy method of bringing on such as were under his care in their learning ; and hence, his school was always full. Particular attention was paid to their morals also : and whatever Mr. Cleator might do in 1746, Mr. Lloyd, the officiating clergyman in Rotherham, had generosity enough, in 1775, to inform the Archbishop of York, when he came to confirm the children, that those under the tuition of Wm. Green were the most perfect of any presented to him in their instructions. Mr. Walker's children were taught by him.

In the midst of the persecution experienced by her daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. Marriott seems to have enjoyed the consolations of religion, and to have been much devoted to God. She observes in her diary, “ Feb. 20, 1750, being the first day of Lent, I now renew my covenant with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ ; and through the aid of the Holy Spirit, make a full surrender of myself, and all that I have, to my Heavenly Father, renouncing my own righteousness, and casting myself, soul and body, on the merits of my crucified Redeemer, who knoweth the thoughts and intents of my heart : and to this I set my hand and seal.” Her own signature follows, with an impression of some melted sealing-wax. If this were more frequently practised in private, it would be the means of additional pious feeling, and consequent stability of character.

A proper Methodist class-meeting was organized and established in Rotherham, and some of the monies collected, amounting to 2s. 4d., lodged in the hands of Wm. Parkin. This is noticed with a view to shew, that what was introduced at Bristol *, had become general, and that the people were no sooner benefited by the gospel, than they directed their attention to its support. Mr. Timothy Gothard, who died at Hunslet, near Leeds, in the 83d year of his age, attended the public meetings at Rotherham at this period, and would have

* Mr. Wesley's Works, vol. xv. p. 331.

joined the society, had it not been for his wife, who was much prejudiced against the Methodists. He made a good finish in 1805.*

1751. In Wm. Green's book account, it appears that Wm. Darney laboured in these parts, in 1751, whose signature stands to some circuit matters. Such was the poverty of most of the members in the Rotherham society, that several of them subscribed for hymn-books, and paid the money by instalments. The hymn-books were in all probability such as Wm. Darney himself had published; for a small volume was published by him, together with a volume of sermons, on the leading doctrines of the gospel. He was instrumental in raising several societies in the north of England, which for some time went by the name of Wm. Darney's societies. He was intimately acquainted with Mr. Grimshaw, of Howarth, and was rendered peculiarly useful to him in the commencement of his Christians course. He was a native of Scotland, rather eccentric, but generally deemed pious. He finished his course in peace, in the year 1780.

1752. After an absence of upwards of two years, Mr. WESLEY again visited Sheffield, Monday, April 13, 1752, where he preached "in the shell of the new house." "All," says he, "is peace here now, since the trial at York. Surely the magistrate has been the minister of God to us for good!"† Whether this trial had any connexion with the building pulled down by the rioters, in 1746, when the magistrates refused to act, and where "the shell of the new house" stood, is uncertain. It is conjectured, however, that, if it were finished, and occupied in the course of the year, it must have been situated somewhere towards the further end of Orchard-street, formerly called Brinceworth's Orchard; for William Woodhouse, of Hallam, heard preaching there about this time. The place, he observed, was like a dwelling-house; but this was the general form of all the first Methodist preaching-houses in Sheffield. Wm. W. was not then in connexion with the body, and, of course, unable to enter into any circumstantial account. After his marriage in 1749, he was in the

* Meth. Mag. 1806, p.326.

† Journals, vol. iii. p. 115,

habit of carrying milk into Sheffield, and supplying the family of John Butler with it, but omitting one day to come into town, through indisposition, he was asked the reason of his absence. Finding affliction to be the cause, John Butler embraced the opportunity of speaking to him on the subject of personal religion, and pressed him to attend preaching. He prepared for service on the Lord's day morning, and told his wife he hoped to hear a good sermon that day. Having observed him to be unusually pensive, and being a little suspicious from some words which he had dropped, that he was going to hear the Methodists, she cautioned him against it, and intimated that she should be happy to see him attend Church, or go any where indeed, rather than among such a people. He made no positive declaration of his intentions, but nevertheless attended, and heard a Methodist preacher for the first time. And here the Society seems to have worshipped, either in Thomas Prince's, till the "shell" was finished; or, if the identical "shell" was completed, till the removal to Mulberry-street.

Mr. WESLEY passed the night at Sheffield, and says, "Tuesday 14, I went to B——, whence the Vicar, Mr. D——, had sent a messenger on purpose, to desire he might see me. I found him in deep distress for the loss of his wife, mixed with strong desires after God. Hearing I was going to preach at Rotherham, he offered to go with me. He seemed to stagger at nothing; though, as yet, his understanding is not opened. O that he may not rest till it is!"* This appears to have been Mr. WESLEY's first visit to Rotherham, and for this, William Green and his good wife, had made every preparation. He was at Syke-house, May 21, the year following.†

1753. At the close of this year, and through part of 1753, a daughter of Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, formerly called Woodsets, was singularly afflicted; and this was probably one of the domestic calamities which brought Jonathan to serious reflection. "June 5th, 1753," says Mr. WESLEY, "I rode over to Jonathan Booth's at Woodseats, whose daughter had been ill in

* Journals, vol. iii. p. 115.

† Ibid. p. 156.

a very uncommon manner. The account her parents gave of it was as follows:—

“About the middle of December, 1752, Elizabeth Booth, junior, near ten years old, began to complain of a pain in her breast, which continued three days. On the fourth day, in a moment, without any provocation, she began to be in a vehement rage, reviling her mother, and throwing at the maid what came next to hand. This fit continued near an hour. Then in an instant she was quite calm. The next morning she fell into a fit of another kind, being stretched out, and stiff as a dead carcase. Thus she lay about an hour. In the afternoon she was suddenly seized with violent involuntary laughter; and she had some or other of these fits several times a day, for about a month. In the intervals of them she was in great heaviness of soul, and continually crying for mercy: till one Saturday, as she lay stretched out on the bed, she broke out, ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ Her faith and love increased from that time: but so did the violence of her fits also: and often while she was rejoicing and praising God, she would cry out, ‘O Lord!’ and losing her senses at once, lie as dead, or laugh violently, or rave and blaspheme.

“In the middle of February she grew more outrageous than ever. She frequently strove to throw herself into the fire, or out of the window. Often she attempted to tear the Bible, cursing it in the bitterest manner. And many times she uttered oaths and blasphemies, too horrid to be repeated. Next to the Bible, her greatest rage was against the Methodists, Mr. W. (WESLEY) in particular. She frequently told us where he was, and what he was then doing: adding, ‘He will be here soon:’ and at another time, ‘Now he is galloping down the lane, and two men with him.’ In the intervals of her fits she was unusually stupid and moped, as if void of common understanding: and yet sometimes broke out into vehement prayer, to the amazement of all that heard.

“Sometimes she would strip herself stark naked, and run up and down the house, screaming and crying,

‘Save me, save me. He will tear me in pieces.’ At other times she cried out, ‘He is tearing off my breasts; he is pouring melted lead down my throat. Now I suffer what the martyrs suffered. But I have not the martyrs’ faith.’

“She frequently spoke as if she was another person, saying to her father, ‘This girl is not thine, but mine. I have got possession of her, and I will keep her:’ with many expressions of the same kind.

“She often seemed to be in a trance, and said she saw many visions: sometimes of heaven or hell, or judgment; sometimes of things which, she said, would shortly come to pass.

“In the beginning of March, Mrs. G. (Green) came over from Rotherham, who herself gave me the following account:—‘Soon after I came in, she fell into a raging fit, blaspheming and cursing her father and me.’ She added, ‘It was I that made Green’s horse so bad the other day;’ (which had been taken ill in a most unaccountable manner, as soon as he was put into the stable;) I did it that thou mightest have the preaching no more, and I had almost persuaded thee to it. It was I that made thee bad last night.’ I was then taken in an unusual way. All the time she spoke she was violently convulsed, and appeared to be in strong agony. After about a quarter of an hour, she broke out into prayer, and then came to herself, only still dull and heavy.’

“John Thorpe, of Rotherham, had often a desire to pray for her in the congregation. But he was as often hindered, by a strong and sudden impression on his mind, that she was dead. When he came to Woodseats, and began to mention what a desire he had had, the girl being then in a raging fit, cried out, ‘I have made a fool of Thorpe, and burst out into loud laughter.’

“In the beginning of May, all these symptoms ceased: and she continued in health both of body and soul.”*

* Journals, vol. iii. p. 158—160.

The above is one of those cases of which Mr. WESLEY simply states the fact, of which he entertained his own private opinion, and left others, without reasoning upon it, to entertain theirs. In the same way it is dismissed on the present occasion, with the exception of one remark, which concerns the father of the girl. His hostility to the Methodists, noticed in a preceding page, increased a little prior to this afflictive dispensation of Providence; and increased so much too, as to induce him to ride about 40 miles, with a view to meet Mr. WESLEY, to request him to withdraw the labours of the preachers from Woodseats. The affliction in his family commenced immediately after; he himself viewed it as a judgment from God; recalled the preachers, and became, through it, a religious character. The young person was afterwards married to Mr. John Oliver, one of the preachers.

Mr. WESLEY had preached at Sheffield the evening before he visited Woodseats, which was on Monday. Tuesday seems to have been divided between the two places. On the Wednesday, he remarks, "It being still sultry hot, I preached under a shady tree at Barley Hall, and in an open place at Rotherham, in the evening." From thence he proceeded to Nottingham, where "God was greatly reviving his work, and pouring water upon the dry ground."

Ere this period, honest William Brammah had begun to exhort a little in Sheffield, his native place, and in the towns and villages around. He was at Potter-Hill and Burn-Cross, in the neighbourhood of Thorncliffe, in 1753, at the first of which places he told one of the members of Society, who probably had wished him to give the people something super-excellent, "He would preach like an archangel; he would do his best for the good of souls, and an archangel could do no more." A person of the name of Wm. Hoyland had preaching in his house at Potter-Hill, and another of the name of Edward Watson, originally from Bradford, opened his door for the Methodists at Burn-Cross.

Hunsfield, about six miles west of Sheffield, and two from Totley, was another of those small places which received the Methodists, chiefly through the instrumen-

tality of George Levick, a tailor, who yielded to the power of Divine grace, and lived in the village. This good man attended Divine service frequently at Beau-chief Abbey, where he often met with Jonathan and Elizabeth Booth, and where a pious clergyman seems to have officiated at the time.

CHAP. VII.

Mr. Wesley preaches and meets the Society—Marquis of Rockingham attends preaching at Barley Hall—Mr. James Kershaw—Copy of a letter to a clergyman, and a dialogue between Wm. Green and the same—Ecclesfield—John Thorpe—The work of God in Derbyshire—Sheffield incorporated with Leeds—Persecution—Conversion of Wm. Woodhouse—Preaching at an Inn—Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament—The preachers in these parts—A painful Providence—Continued persecutions.

1755. FROM the year 1753 to 1755, there is a complete dearth of information, both historical and traditional. This is partly accounted for by Mr. WESLEY. On "Thursday, June 12, 1755," he remarks, "at eight I preached at Clayworth, and at Rotherham in the evening. Here likewise was such a number of people assembled, as was never before seen in that town. Is not this one clear proof of the hand of God, that although the novelty of this preaching is over, yet the people flock to hear it in every place, far more than when it was a new thing? Friday 13th, in the evening I preached at Sheffield. In the morning I examined the members of Society, and was agreeably surprised to find, that though none had visited them, since I did it myself, two years ago, yet they were rather increased than diminished in number, and many of them growing in grace."* They had been entirely dependant on their own resources.

Some time previous to this, the Marquis of Rockingham, his lady, and the present Earl Fitzwilliam's father, attended preaching at Mr. Johnson's, of Barley Hall. Their intention was known, and Mr. James Kershaw, a man of considerable talents, put forth all

* Journals, vol. iii. p. 205.

his mental energies on the occasion, probably with a view to roll away, as far as he could, the Methodistical reproach of *ignorance*. He unfortunately overshot the mark; they perceived an evident design at display, and were less satisfied than they would otherwise have been in hearing a plain sermon on the leading truths of Scripture. Mr. Kershaw commenced his itinerant labours, according to Mr. Myles, in 1752, and desisted in 1767 *; Mr. Atmore fixes the period of his relinquishing the itinerant life, 1757 †; but what Mr. Myles probably gains, relative to the close of Mr. Kershaw's itinerant life, in point of correctness, he loses at the outset; for Mr. Samuel Birks heard him preach much earlier than 1752, at Barley Hall, in the character of a travelling preacher. Mr. Kershaw settled several years at Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, where he continued in connexion with the Methodist body, and occasionally preached. His last residence was Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where he died. He wrote a Comment on the Book of Revelation, by way of Dialogue, which gives a favourable view of his abilities.

While others were labouring, Wm. Green, of Rotherham, was far from being idle. In addition to his pulpit exertions, he studied usefulness in private. The following is a letter which he sent to the Rev. — Wilkinson, of Barmber, July 27, 1755:—

“Reverend Sir,

“As you passed by yesterday, I thought it a pity that any of your cloth should be so ill employed as to spend your precious time in such foolish vanities as the horse-races. How much better would it have been, if you had been going from house to house in your parish, in order to reclaim the wicked, and instruct the ignorant, respecting the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, where he says, ‘No idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;’ or the words of Christ, Luke xiii. 3, ‘Except ye repent, ye

* Chron. Hist. p. 447. † Meth. Memor. p. 237.

CHAP. VII.

Mr. Wesley preaches and meets the Society—Marquis of Rockingham attends preaching at Barley Hall—Mr. James Kershaw—Copy of a letter to a clergyman, and a dialogue between Wm. Green and the same—Ecclesfield—John Thorpe—The work of God in Derbyshire—Sheffield incorporated with Leeds—Persecution—Conversion of Wm. Woodhouse—Preaching at an Inn—Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament—The preachers in these parts—A painful Providence—Continued persecutions.

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* Journals, vol. iii. p. 205.

his mental energies on the occasion, probably with a view to roll away, as far as he could, the Methodistical reproach of *ignorance*. He unfortunately overshot the mark; they perceived an evident design at display, and were less satisfied than they would otherwise have been in hearing a plain sermon on the leading truths of Scripture. Mr. Kershaw commenced his itinerant labours, according to Mr. Myles, in 1752, and desisted in 1767 *; Mr. Atmore fixes the period of his relinquishing the itinerant life, 1757 †; but what Mr. Myles probably gains, relative to the close of Mr. Kershaw's itinerant life, in point of correctness, he loses at the outset; for Mr. Samuel Birks heard him preach much earlier than 1752, at Barley Hall, in the character of a travelling preacher. Mr. Kershaw settled several years at Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, where he continued in connexion with the Methodist body, and occasionally preached. His last residence was Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where he died. He wrote a Comment on the Book of Revelation, by way of Dialogue, which gives a favourable view of his abilities.

While others were labouring, Wm. Green, of Rotherham, was far from being idle. In addition to his pulpit exertions, he studied usefulness in private. The following is a letter which he sent to the Rev. — Wilkinson, of Barmber, July 27, 1755:—

“Reverend Sir,

“As you passed by yesterday, I thought it a pity that any of your cloth should be so ill employed as to spend your precious time in such foolish vanities as the horse-races. How much better would it have been, if you had been going from house to house in your parish, in order to reclaim the wicked, and instruct the ignorant, respecting the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, where he says, ‘No idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God;’ or the words of Christ, Luke xiii. 3, ‘Except ye repent, ye

* Chron. Hist. p. 447. † Meth. Memor. p. 237.

shall all likewise perish.' To have done thus, would have been commendable in itself, the discharge of a duty incumbent upon you, and to profit others. As the Scripture says, 'Thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy brother,' I thought it my duty to write a few lines to you in love, supposing that, if you were a person of sense and reason, you would not take it ill. If I make too free, or am wrong informed in my judgment, I hope you will reprove me kindly, and inform me better, and neither make sport of my good intent, nor of the Sacred Scriptures, which, if you will please to examine yourself by, will turn to your advantage. Propose to yourself such questions as these:—

“1. Am I now striving to enter in at the strait gate?

“2. Am I now working out my salvation with fear and trembling?

“3. Am not I now conforming to this world?

“4. Am I doing every thing, and *this* in particular, to the glory of God?

“5. Am I not setting my affections upon things of the earth?

“6. Do I believe that, for every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment?

“7. Am I fighting under Christ's banner?

“8. Am I renouncing the vanities of the world?

“Dear Sir, you will surely not evade these serious questions; or improperly apply the words of Solomon, where he says, 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; you will not, I say, improperly apply these words, when you know what a thunder-clap follows, 'But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment?'

“Your's, &c.

“W.M. GREEN.”

The Reverend Gentleman was far from receiving the rebuke in the spirit of meekness; he regarded it as from an enemy, not a friend. William being a little desirous to know the effect produced by it, threw himself in his

way, when the following conversation took place, as recorded by himself:—

“ *W. Green.* Will you allow me to ask, Sir, whether you received a few lines lately?

“ *Clergyman.* Is your name Green?

“ *W. G.* Yes, Sir. Please to let us have a little conversation with each other.

“ *C.* (*With angry countenance,*) Pray, what business have you to meddle with me?

“ *W. G.* Dear Sir, be not out of temper. I only concluded it to be my duty to speak to you, knowing you to be a shepherd, and seeing you running astray, determined to reprove you, whether you would hear, or whether you would forbear; for the Bible authorizes us to rebuke sin before all men, and not to suffer sin upon one another.

“ *C.* You belong to a company of runagates; fellows who run up and down the country, deceiving the people, picking their pockets, pretending to preach the gospel, and yet are not legally called.

“ *W. G.* Hold, Sir. Legally called! If such are not legally called by having the Bishop's hand put upon them, I am inclined to think they are called of God. I can produce many in the town who, in time past, were notorious sinners, i. e. swearers, Sabbath-breakers, drunkards, adulterers, passionate, &c., who, through these illegal preachers, have become new creatures. Now, Sir, this work must either be of God or the devil: pray, tell me, to which of the two does it belong?

“ *C.* Undoubtedly, every thing that is good is of God.

“ *W. G.* Very well. Then *you* are legally called, and have been preaching to your congregation many years. How many drunkards have become sober, how many liars speak the truth, debauched persons have become chaste, and thieves have become honest, through your preaching? If you can produce but one who has become entirely changed, I shall not dare to say but you have been called of God, as well as of man. But if you have no seals of this kind to your ministry, I must take the freedom to tell you, that, although you are called of

man, you are not called of God, and though you scandalize others as picking the pockets of the people, I should be glad to hear you clear yourself of this charge, That you seek more for the *fleece* than the *flock*." Here the Dialogue unfortunately breaks off; but it terminates in a way which evidently shews, that it was W. Green's intention to have committed the whole to paper.

Derbyshire, as well as this part of Yorkshire, continued to experience the effects of the early labours of David Taylor and John Bennet; especially the village of Chelmorton, noticed in 1742, in connexion with Mr. John Marsden. Mr. Peter Jaco * was labouring in these parts about this period, and was the instrument in the hand of God, when preaching at Chelmorton, of rousing the attention of Mr. George Marsden's mother to a serious concern for her salvation. Her maiden name was Buxton; she was the grand-daughter of Mr. John Buxton, a non-conformist, who, when in 1662, upwards of 2000 of the best and most learned of the clergy were forced from their churches by the Act of Uniformity, was one of those who gladly invited them to preach in his house: and the first who preached in it was the ejected minister of Glossop, the Rev. William Bagshaw, remembered still in Derbyshire by the name of the "Apostle of the Peak."†

As Miss Buxton's grandfather was returning one day from church, a circumstance occurred, which was eventually attended with so many blessed effects as to deserve recording. A violent storm arising on his return home, he was obliged to take shelter in the first house that presented itself. Entering into free conversation with the mother of the family, she candidly told him, that the apprenticeship of a son, who had been bound to a shoemaker, being expired, she was at a loss to know what to do with him. The benevolent and pious man resolved to assist them; and therefore offered, if the young man, whose name was Thomas Bennett,

* We find him in Yorkshire in 1754, when Derbyshire was connected with it; see Meth. Mag. 1778, p. 544. † See Calamy's Account of Ejected Ministers.

would be steady, to procure him leather, and provide a room in his house, for him to work in. This proposal was gratefully accepted, and the young man became, not only a respectable member of civil society, but a truly pious character. He it was who, by inviting the Methodists to Chelmorton*, was, under God, the instrument of good to the family of his benefactor, since by the introduction of the gospel by the Methodist preachers into the village, the two grand-daughters of Mr. Buxton were brought to the knowledge of the truth. Thus did the merciful most truly obtain mercy, the kindness of the grandfather being more than repaid in the conversion of his children's children. The effects of this act of benevolence did not terminate here; for Miss Hannah Buxton, (afterwards Mrs. Marsden,) was rendered useful to the descendants of Mr. Thomas Bennett. His grandson, Mr. Thomas Lomas, many years a respectable steward of the society in Manchester, having settled in that town, became intimately acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. John Marsden during their residence there. Designing to visit his friends in Derbyshire, he called one day at Mr. M.'s previous to his setting out on his journey. Conversing with Mrs. M. on Divine subjects, he began anxiously to inquire what he must do to obtain a sense of God's love to his soul? She replied, "Believe in Jesus;" and earnestly pressed the necessity and earnestness of faith. This exhortation was rendered useful; for while he was travelling that evening, and reflecting upon what she had said to him, he was enabled to believe that Christ had loved him, and given himself for him, and thenceforward rejoiced in God his Saviour. Several years afterwards, when settled in London, she was exceedingly useful also to his son Robert, who became book-steward for the Connexion. The painful feelings of his mind under conviction for sin, though he was only about thirteen years of age, having brought him into such extreme debility of body that he was confined to his bed, and his death hourly expected, she was sent for to see him, and while she was praying with him, the Lord shed his love abroad in his heart, and

* John Bennet; as stated in 1742.

misery was exchanged for transport.* Thus “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting: and his righteousness unto children’s children.”†

1756. Through the absence of Mr. WESLEY, and the travelling preachers, between 1753 and 1755, a change seems to have taken place relative to Sheffield, as the head of a circuit. We find it again incorporated with Leeds. Mr. Thomas Lee observes in a memoir of himself, “About this time, I had thirteen places where I preached at regularly. And I thought only of spending my life among them, when Mr. Grimshaw mentioned me to you (Mr. WESLEY.) You sent for me and asked, ‘Whether I was willing to be a travelling preacher?’ I said, Yes, if Mr. Grimshaw would supply my places; which he promised to do. That year I was most in the Birstal and Leeds circuit; the next in the Leeds circuit altogether, which then comprehended Sheffield and York also, extending into Derbyshire on the south, to Hull on the east, and on the north as far as Newton, under Roseberry-topping.”‡

Another of the preachers, who appears to have laboured in these parts at this period, was Mr. Thomas Hanby, whose name stands in Wm. Green’s book, as receiving monies from him, for works published by Mr. WESLEY, which monies he was to pay into the hands of Wm. Shent, of Leeds. This too, as well as the extract from Mr. Lee’s memoir, intimates the connexion between Sheffield, Rotherham, and Leeds, and their dependance on the same preachers for aid.

Ecclesfield, which was visited in 1748, and had been abandoned for a season, was again received into the number of those places which had preaching. Mr. Thomas Abdey, a tanner, together with his wife and daughter, were members of society. He entertained the preachers, and had preaching in his house, a large old building near the entrance to the present chapel. There was preaching occasionally, too, on Ecclesfield Common. It was here that a person of the name of

* See his own account of it, Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 7, 8. N.B. All the Magazines quoted from 1811, are the shilling numbers, or enlarged edition. † Meth. Mag. 1808, p. 77—80. ‡ Ibid. 1780, p. 141.

Henry Moorwood brought some ale from Pashley's public-house, and offered to the preacher, while he was preaching. On the preacher refusing to drink, and shewing him the impropriety of his conduct, Moorwood said, "If you will not have it *within* you, you shall have it *upon* you," and so dashed it full at him, sprinkling those around. Mr. Thomas Cooper, now a member of Elijah West's class, stood by Moorwood at the time, and related the circumstance to the writer. This old man was born at Charton Brook, near Thorncliffe, Oct. 30, 1745, and has been a member of the Methodist Society fifty-two years. His father, John Cooper, was the first class-leader at Potter-hill, and led a class there at the time the above insult was offered; which class he continued to lead, till within a few years of his death, when, through loss of sight, and other infirmities, he was unable to look after the members, and gave it up to Matthew Bailey. The preaching on the Common was at David Hague's; and there, both Wm. Green and John Thorpe used to proclaim the gospel.

Many of the expedients employed to interrupt the heralds of the gospel in proclaiming their message to the people, were distinguished with considerable ingenuity, and might serve to amuse a leisure hour in their perusal, were they not generally connected with some diabolical design. One of these is the following, in which we find the tragic and the ludicrous united, and to which the writer of these pages could scarcely have given credit, had it not been related to him by an eye-witness, who is yet living and a member of the Methodist Society in Sheffield. No entrance as yet could be obtained into Wortley and Thurgoland, in consequence of which there was preaching at Crane Moor, at no great distance, in the house of one Samuel Brammah. Several persons, from twenty to thirty years of age, inhabitants of Wortley, contemplated serious mischief to John Thorpe. They procured a large quantity of black hair-cloth, and gave to it a form resembling that which the vulgar generally conceive the devil to possess, and which artists have foolishly given to him in prints and paintings, furnishing him with a tail, a pair of horns, a pair of wings, and cloven feet. This was so constructed

as to admit of a stout person to be concealed in the inside, who, by the assistance of a pole, could push forward as much of the hair-cloth as would open and enfold a second. A lantern was suspended in the interior of the head of this frightful figure, which, by the aid of a lighted candle, blazed through the openings intended to represent the eyes, the mouth, and the nostrils. Thus prepared, they set off to Samuel Brammah's, of Crane Moor, where there was preaching once a month, having first assured themselves that John Thorpe was there, who was the object of their sport and of their hatred. It was their intention to seize him in the act of preaching by the person concealed in the hair-cloth, to take him from thence to the top of the Clappers, a high hill, and to roll him down; which, from its situation, would in all probability either have killed or maimed him. Fortunately for the preacher, Charles Hobson, who related the circumstance, and who was then twelve years of age, was near the spot when the plan was laid, overheard the whole, and communicated it to his parents. It was imparted to others, who, though not Methodists, were the friends and hearers of John Thorpe. These way-laid the Wortley tribe with their mock-devil, furnished with large sticks. It was in the winter season; the night was dark: but the eyes of the hideous form were sufficient marks for those who were in ambush. No sooner did the persons from Wortley approach the place, than the others burst from their concealment, and laid about them most lustily; taking most ample vengeance on the gentleman beneath the hair-cloth, who found himself rather too much encumbered to make an abrupt and sudden departure. Instead of John Thorpe meeting with the fate intended, he was permitted to preach without molestation; and instead of the oppositionists from Wortley having it to report, that "The devil flew away with the preacher," and so impose, as was their design, on the credulous, they had to declare their defeat and chastisement. It was not likely to terminate here, for Mr. Cockshut, whose daughters attended preaching, and who had been repeatedly insulted by the same persons, was roused to prosecute for former offences. Through entreaties, promises, and penitence,





RESIDENCE OF W^M WOODHOUSE. FULWOOD.

pardon was granted; and peace was enjoyed in the neighbourhood some time afterwards.

Persecution reared its hydra head in different other places. A preacher, through its violence, was driven out of Hathersage, in Derbyshire: but, like the opposition made to the gospel in Jerusalem, which opposition was the means of planting the truth in Samaria, and elsewhere, the same blast which prevented the seed taking root at Hathersage, scattered it in the valleys and on the hills about Hallam, where trees have been raised, and Christian societies have long enjoyed their shade. No positive information can be obtained of any particular attention having been paid to the moral culture of these parts, by the Methodists, since the days of David Taylor. A solitary person, Nathan Clayton, who was either a member of Society in Sheffield, or a hearer of preaching, lived near where the chapel now stands; and thither the persecuted preacher fled. He proposed giving the people in the neighbourhood a sermon, fixed the time, and Nathan, who offered his house, made known his intention. The novelty of the thing drew many together, and the house was more than filled. Marshall Thorpe and Wm. Woodhouse were present, together with the wife of the latter, whose prejudices had been so far conquered as to suffer her to give the sect every where spoken against one hearing. Mrs. W. was so much captivated with what she heard, that, without any previous consultation with her husband, or regard to ceremony, she stepped up to the preacher, and, in the hearing of all present, said, "The next time you visit this neighbourhood, you shall preach in our house; it is large enough, and will hold you all." William, who had experienced some compunctions visitings, was delighted with his wife's conduct. It was not long before the request was acceded to by Mr. James Oddy, who was hospitably entertained by William and his wife, and whose text was, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Some of the neighbours were considerably exasperated, and declared, if it had not been Wm. Woodhouse's dwelling, they would have pulled it down,



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but as he was a good neighbour, they would forbear acts of violence. What is not a little singular, the house was a *public-house*, and preaching was in it some time before either William or his wife were converted to God. They at length found the pearl of great price; and though the public-house was continued, no drinking was allowed on the Lord's day, nor were any permitted to get intoxicated in it. The prudence, zeal, anxious solicitude for the salvation of others, and piety of this good woman, were truly exemplary. The preachers not being able to visit the places regularly, as in the present day, from the small number of hands employed, and from the various providential openings to other places, which required attention, the people were not always apprized of their coming; nor was there always time to give sufficient publicity of the service. The inventive faculty of William's wife soon supplied means of information. Having experienced the difficulty once, and got the people partially collected, she told them that, whenever the preacher came, she should suspend a *white sheet*, a very proper emblem of the purity of the gospel, its professors, and its heaven, in a conspicuous place on the brow of the hill, naming, at the same time, the hour of service. When the white flag was hoisted, every eye was directed towards it, as to a beacon on some promontory; and not more elated are the tenants and neighbours of some of our noblemen, who still retain the custom, when they see the flag streaming in the wind, from the highest turret of some venerable mansion that has witnessed feudal times, announcing a public entertainment, than were the pious people of Fulwood and Hallam, when they beheld the signal for dispensing the bread of life. They were seen, at the time appointed, ascending and descending the different hills, in different directions, or pouring down the valley, all bending their course to the spot where the standard of the Cross was about to be raised, and their souls refreshed. An interesting group, composed of Mr. Bolsover's daughters, of Whiteley Wood, were often seen on an opposite rise from William Woodhouse's, listening with apparent pleasure to the singing, and to whose ears, when the preacher was sufficiently

loud, a word was occasionally borne on the passing breeze. Mr. Bolsover himself afterwards became a hearer of the Methodists, permitted them to preach in Whiteley Wood Hall, contributed considerably towards the erection of Hallam Chapel, gave the ground, and left a hundred pounds to build a small chapel at Whiteley Wood.

Mrs. Woodhouse made rapid progress in the divine life; her career was short, but bright. She understood human nature well, and the impediments to growth in grace. One evening, after service, her husband, in the simplicity of his soul, and from the good he had received, let two or three words drop in the way of praise, relative to the sermon. She stood behind the preacher, and with a significant shake of the head, and expression of the countenance, elevating and clasping her hand at the same time, imposed silence; intimating that praise might inflate the speaker with pride, and that they were to look through the instrument to the Author of good. When she saw any stranger begin to frequent a place of worship, she earnestly interceded with God in their behalf. This was especially the case, when, after the opening of Mulberry-street Chapel, which she attended with her husband, she first saw Mr. George Story begin to hear preaching; and it is probable, though unknown to him, that he was not a little indebted to Mrs. Woodhouse, for her fervent, effectual prayers. She caught a malignant fever, when visiting the sick, and died in the full triumph of faith, in 1761. Preaching was continued in the house for several years; but it was not till 1764, that it was licensed as a place of worship, being then the 4th year of the reign of Geo. III. The licence was obtained by Wm. Woodhouse and Benjamin Kirkby, at the Rotherham Quarter Sessions; Francis Wood and Samuel Tooker, Esqs., were upon the bench. On the day that old Mr. Woodhouse's portrait was taken, the licence was handed out, which he was able to read without glasses. The writer could not resist various reflections which forced themselves upon the mind, while conning over the legal instrument. The house was licensed both as a *public-house* and a *house of prayer*, and both licences were in full authority at the same

time ; the one, though contrary to the original intention of inns, and the design of the legislature, converting it into a synagogue of Satan, and the other restoring it to its primitive use in the order of Providence, for the comfort and accommodation of travellers, and authorizing its inmates to convert it into a temple for the worship of the living God. So, may every thing inimical to good order and Christian morals perish, O Lord ! —perish by being restored and renovated. The house is partly occupied by George Marsden, son-in-law to William Woodhouse, and a class-leader of the Methodist Society ; but is not now employed as an inn. It was not long after preaching was thus introduced into Hallam, before a class was formed, and, as previously stated, was led by Sarah Moore.

Proposals appear to have been issued this year for the purpose of soliciting subscribers for Mr. WESLEY's Notes on the New Testament, which, he informs us, he began to write in February, 1754.* A list of the subscribers' names, as written by Wm. Green, who appears still to have been Mr. WESLEY's book-agent for this part of the country, has been preserved ; and among the Sheffield subscribers, the names of John Butler, James Walker, Thomas Watkinson, Joseph Dewsnap, Edward Bennet, Robert Marsden, Sarah Savage, Edward Gregory, and Ezra Twigg, are found. As many as 108 parts, at six shillings per part, came at a time ; and these were forwarded to Epworth and Grimsby, in Lincolnshire, and other places. Among the purchasers of Mr. WESLEY's works in Rotherham, were Mr. Samuel Walker, John Thorpe, Val. Radley, Wm. Green, and others. There were also a number of "effigies" sold at the same time, probably engravings of Mr. WESLEY, at sixpence each. It was not long after this, that Wm. Green had to record, "The books which I have left to dispose of are, two parts of Edward Bennet's Notes, whose subscription I have bought of him ;" which is partly explained in Mr. Edward Bennet's growing attachment to Mr. Whitfield, and his final separation from the Methodists.

* Journals, vol. ii. p. 179.

In addition to Messrs. Lee and Hanby, the societies appear to have had the labours of Mr. Wm. Alwood, Mr. Michael Fenwick, and Mr. William Fugill. Of William Alwood, who is not even noticed in Mr. Atmore's Methodist Memorial, very little can be said. He began his itinerant labours in 1756, and departed from the work in 1764*. If this be correct, he must have been a local preacher, when Marshall Thorpe heard him preach at Bradwell, in 1753. The most authentic account that can now be obtained of him is, that he served an apprenticeship to a butcher of the name of Crook, in the Park,—that, just at the time when he was released from his servitude, he heard David Taylor,—that he became deeply pious,—and finally went out as a travelling preacher, in which capacity he continued, till, probably, the period assigned by Mr. Myles for his departure from the work. Of Michael Fenwick, an opportunity will offer of saying a little hereafter. Wm. Fugill, who was a native of Rothwell, near Leeds, was a man of considerable ministerial abilities; and, for some years, was extensively useful, and highly acceptable to the people among whom he laboured. He fell from his stedfastness, and was excluded from the Connexion, in 1764. After another trial of him in 1767, a second separation took place: he then retired to Rothwell, where he spent the remainder of his days in poverty and disgrace, and died in 1800.

1757. On Monday, July 25, 1757, Mr. WESLEY left Epworth with great satisfaction, and about one preached at Clayworth. At the latter place, he observes, "I think none was unmoved, but Michael Fenwick, who fell fast asleep under an adjoining hay-stack." The publication of this may appear severe; but when it is known, that Michael was an offensive ape of Mr. WESLEY, and that he had been weak enough to complain to some of the preachers, that Mr. WESLEY never noticed him in his journals, a more effectual check could scarcely have been given to his vanity. From Clayworth he rode, in company with others, to Rotherham. When he arrived, he had neither strength nor voice left.

* Myles's Chron. Hist. p. 446.

However, in an hour he was able to preach to one of the largest congregations, which was ever supposed to have assembled there. On Wednesday 27th, he preached about noon at Barley Hall, and in the evening at Sheffield. After spending a short time with the Society, he lay down as soon as possible, but could not sleep before twelve o'clock; and not long together after. Yet he felt no faintness in the morning, but rose lively and well, and had his voice more clear and strong in preaching, than it had been for several days.

Thursday 28th, he received what he terms "a strange account from Edward Bennet's eldest daughter," which is as follows:—"On Tuesday, the 19th of this month, I told my husband in the morning, 'I desire you will not go into the water to-day; at least, not into the deep water, on the far side of the town. For I dreamed I saw you there out of your depth, and only your head came up just above the water.' He promised me he would not, and went to work. Soon after four in the afternoon, being at John Hanson's, his partner's house, I was on a sudden extremely sick, so that for some minutes I seemed just ready to expire. Then I was well in a moment. Just at the time, John Hanson, who was an excellent swimmer, persuaded my husband to go into the water on the far side of the town. He objected, the water was deep, and he could not swim; and being much importuned to go in, stood some time after he was undressed, and then kneeling down, prayed with an earnest and loud voice. When he arose from his knees, John, who was swimming, called him again, and treading the water, said, 'See, it is only breast high.' He stepped in, and sunk. A man who was near, cutting fern, and had observed him for some time, ran to the bank, and saw his head come up just above the water. The second or third time he rose, he clasped his hands, and cried aloud, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Immediately he sunk and rose no more. One might naturally inquire, What became of John Hanson? As soon as he saw his partner sink, he swam from him to the other side, put on his clothes, and went straight home."

"About noon," says Mr. WESLEY, "I preached at Woodseats; in the evening at Sheffield. I do indeed live by preaching! How quiet is this country now, since the chief persecutors are no more seen! How many of them have been snatched away, in an hour, when they looked not for it! Some time since, a woman of Thorpe often swore she would wash her hands in the heart's blood of the next preacher that came: but before the next preacher came, she was carried to her long home. A little before John Johnson settled at Wentworth, a stout, healthy man who lived there, told his neighbours, 'After May-day, we shall have nothing but praying and preaching: but I will make noise enough to stop it:' but before May-day he was silent in his grave. A servant of Lord R—— (Rockingham) was as bitter as he, and told many lies, purposely to make mischief: but before this was done, his mouth was stopped. He was drowned in one of the fish-ponds."*

Though some persecutors were represented to Mr. WESLEY as removed, there were others who long triumphed in Rotherham; two of whom were the ring-leaders of others, in every species of opposition to Methodism. One of them, John Robinson, had been a drummer in the army; and he was generally employed in beating his drum, in order to drown the voice of the preacher; till, unfortunately for him, Mr. Bartholomew Hunsfield, grandfather to Mr. T. Hunsfield, of Brinsworth, went up to him one day, and sent his knife through the top of it, and thus, in the face of the mob, rendered the instrument unserviceable. Mr. Hunsfield was a member of Society, and being a person of property and respectability, the mob were less violent and revengeful, than if it had been a person in indigent circumstances, who had destroyed the instrument of their mirth. A person of the name of Smith, a butcher, adopted other methods of annoyance. Being a man of great muscular strength, he would sometimes go up to the preacher, take him in his arms, and after sporting with him, then bear him away in triumph. On one occasion, he carried a preacher in this way into the

* Journals, vol. iii. p. 301, 302, 303.

yard belonging to the parsonage. At other periods, he exchanged sport for wanton mischief; and, with a large bucket, full of blood, and other ingredients from the slaughter-house, would have gone up to the person preaching, and have thrown it upon him, and on the serious part of his audience. The descendants of this man have learnt another lesson, and there is one of them, a grandson, Mr. Richard Smith, a local preacher in the Methodist Connexion, in the Pontefract circuit. Either these men, or their persecuting associates, tarred and feathered a horse belonging to Mr. Johnson, of Barley Hall, which one of the preachers had borrowed to carry him to Rotherham. There was seldom a time, that any of the Methodist preachers visited the town, in which they were not annoyed, in one way or other, for a succession of years.

CHAP. VIII.

Mr. Wesley's re-union with Mr. Whitfield—Its effects in Sheffield—Thomas Olivers—Preaching in Mulberry-street—Early trustees, leaders and private members of Society—Sheffield taken into the Epworth circuit—John Thorpe separates from the Rotherham Society and forms a party of his own—Some account of Mr. Mather—Persecution—Some account of George Wainwright—Verses by Mr. Holland—Copy of a letter from Mr. Wesley.

1757. IN viewing the state of the Sheffield Society at this period, it will be necessary to advert to still earlier times. An union had taken place between Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield. This was effected in January, 1750, and gave Mr. WESLEY the highest satisfaction. He says, “ Friday 19, in the evening, I read prayers at the chapel in West-street, and Mr. Whitfield preached a plain, affectionate discourse. Sunday 21, he read prayers, and I preached. So, by the blessing of God, one more stumbling-block is removed.”* Ever after this, Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield spoke of each other in the most affectionate terms, assisted each other in their labours, wherever they providentially met, and maintained a correspondence by letter. Desirable as such an union was, it led to partial evils—evils, however, which were afterwards overruled for good.

The good understanding opened up between the two leaders, led, in some instances, to an union of worship among the followers. Hence, in the chapel which succeeded that of 1746, both the Methodists and Calvinists worshipped; Edward Bennet at the head of Mr. Whitfield's interest, John Wilson and others, at the head of Mr. WESLEY's. Calvinism would probably be preached in the morning, and Arminianism in the evening;

* Journals, vol. iii. p. 23.

thus, the minds of the people were often distracted with jarring sentiments. This was not all; but when any were awakened under the Methodist preachers, the persons belonging to Mr. Whitfield's party employed every method to gain them over to their creed. Such were the facts stated by Mr. Thomas Olivers, in 1770, in Mulberry-street chapel, in the hearing of Mr. Thos. Ellis, and the rest of his audience, when on a visit to Sheffield, from Derbyshire, where he then travelled; and but for such a statement, as he then made, the state of the Society had been wrapped up in obscurity; nor should we have known what led to a change of place. We find, from his life, that he was at Leeds, in 1757*, from whence the preachers came to Sheffield. He further stated to his auditors, that when he saw the Methodists gained no ground, he was determined to effect a revolution in one way or other. Accordingly, he took for his text one day, "Wherefore turn yourselves, and live yet;" from whence he established the free agency of man. This gave huge offence to the Calvinist party; and having, from superior numbers, or greater property in the building, the most plausible claims, they discharged Mr. Olivers and his brethren from preaching any more among them. This was what he wanted; and the Wesleyan Methodists being driven out of doors, began to provide for themselves. They procured a building in Mulberry-street, which was converted into a place of worship. Upon this they entered; about twelve yards by ten; without a gallery; the walls, though whitewashed, unplastered; and in this state they continued in it five or six years.

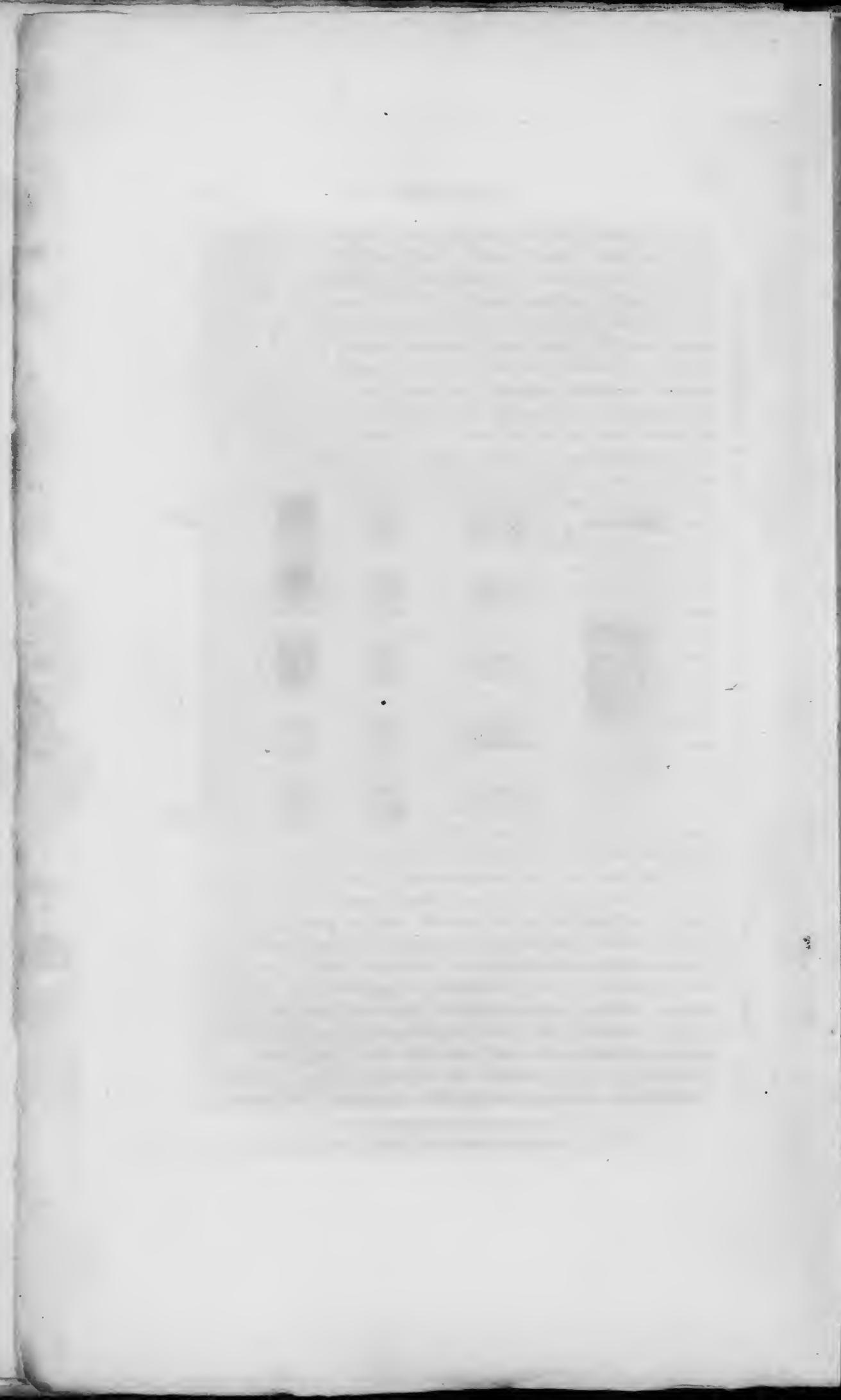
Mr. Thomas Olivers was a native of Wales, and was born in Tregonan, in Montgomeryshire, in 1725. He was a proverb of wickedness prior to his conversion to God, and sometimes made even his associates in vice tremble at his oaths and blasphemies. Through his profligate course of life, he contracted a number of debts. These, when he became religious, he freely discharged, and offered interest to the persons to whom he was indebted, during the period of embarrassment. So much

* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 139—140.

† Ezek. xviii. 32.



MULBERRY STREET PREACHING HOUSE, IN ITS ALTERED FORM, 1825.



in earnest was he, for the salvation of his soul, that he was for some time almost continually upon his knees. By this means he soon grew lame in one knee, and in a short time the other failed, so that it was with difficulty he could walk at all. Mr. WESLEY sent him into Cornwall, in 1753, from which period he gave himself wholly to the Christian ministry. His natural temper was warm, which occasionally exposed him to trouble. As a preacher he was useful and acceptable. He continued to travel till about the year 1775, when he was appointed the corrector of Mr. WESLEY's press. He wrote and published several pamphlets, which prove him to have been a man of considerable mind and reading. His discourse on Heb. ii. 3., is generally esteemed an excellent performance, and is supposed to be by many, what he asserts in the title-page, "A full Refutation of the Doctrine of Unconditional Perseverance." He also composed that admirable hymn, "The God of Abraham praise," which is a fair specimen of his poetic talent; he was also a considerable proficient in music. Had he never penned any thing but his letter to Mr. Hanby, on the death of Mrs. Hanby, in August 19, 1766*, it alone would be sufficient to stamp high respectability on his character as a writer. In addition to considerable grasp of thought, fine discrimination, genius, and force, there are some tender bosom-touches not often to be met with. He died rather suddenly in 1799, and was interred in the Rev. J. WESLEY's vault, in the New Chapel burying-ground, City-road, London.

The place in Mulberry-street, of which the Methodists were now in possession, had been occupied by a person of the name of Sutton, with a view of teaching a school; and for that purpose it continued some time during the week days. It is now partly (1821) in the occupancy of Mr. Damms, a member of the Methodist Society, and partly of another person in the neighbourhood; the former converting his portion into a wire-manufactory, the latter into a billiard-room. It has been raised two stories higher since it was a preaching-house; it stands about the middle of Mulberry-

* Meth. Mag. 1801, p. 309.

street, on the right hand going into High-street. The writer could not but sigh over one part of the building, when he recollects its former use; and with considerable curiosity the whole was examined, while old Mr. Wilkinson pointed out the different parts, where the pulpit stood; where several pious members had their seats, &c. &c. Among the original trustees were Joshua Dewsnap, Henry Glover, John Butler, Thomas Prince, in whose house there had been preaching some time in Brinceworth's Orchard, Ezra Twigg, Henry Alsop, James Walker, and John Paramore. There were others, but their names are not now to be found. The following were leaders of classes, viz. Joseph Kitchen, Henry Alsop, whose class met in Coalpit-lane, Richard Addy, William Hustler, and Thomas Grisby, the last of whom met his class in Trinity-street, in the house of Joshua Dewsnap, father of the present Mr. Dewsnap. One of the members of Society, whom it would be unpardonable not to notice, was Mr. Loy, father of the gentleman who left a legacy to forty poor people, to be paid annually by the trustees of the chapels, and to be continued as long as there shall be a chapel in Sheffield in which the Methodist doctrines are preached. After the first occupancy of Mulberry-street preaching-house, it was twice enlarged, which enlargements will be noticed in a future page.

How long the place from which the Wesleyan Methodists were expelled, was continued by Mr. Whitfield's party, is uncertain; but we find Mr. Edward Bennet heading a religious division in 1774, from the Nether Chapel. "When Mr. Harmer," says Mr. Hunter, "was chosen minister of the Nether Chapel, a small part of the society withdrew, amongst whom was Mr. Edward Bennet, a sugar-baker, who, at his own expense, erected a place for worship in Coalpit-lane."* George Bennet, Esq., now on a mission to Otaheite, whose hand was in every good work, while in Sheffield, with whom the writer had the happiness of a personal acquaintance, and to whom Mr. Montgomery addressed some farewell lines†, is nephew to Mr. Edward Bennet,

* Hunter's Hallamshire, p. 171. † Evangel. Mag. for May, 1821, p. 210.

whose brother John was heir to his property. Mr. John dying in 1800, without issue, having never been married, the property devolved to Mr. George, who is employing it as a faithful steward of God.

Some time about the close of 1757, Sheffield was taken into the Epworth circuit, but still might receive a partial supply from the Leeds preachers. Similar effects began to be felt in Rotherham, to those which had been experienced in Sheffield, from the union between Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Whitfield. Mr. Whitfield met with a favourable reception from the followers of Mr. WESLEY, and not a few embraced his sentiments. John Thorpe led the way for a division in Rotherham; he was followed and supported by Mr. Samuel and Mr. Aaron Walker, who both met in Wm. Green's class, and founded the immense iron-works at Rotherham. Samuel was the father of the late Mr. Joshua Walker, who received his education in Wm. Green's school, and grandfather to the present Henry Walker, Esq., of Blythe, and of Joshua Walker, Esq., banker, London.

In looking over the papers of Mrs. Green, at the period of this division, we find her thus expressing herself:—"Satan hates to see the brethren dwell together in unity, and he found a way to sow discord, first among the preachers, then among the members. This threw a damp on my spirits, and prevented me from being so bold in the cause as I had been wont to be. Besides, I was much united to those from whom I had received good, and I found it hard to hear others speak slightly of them. Lukewarmness crept in among us, and we began, as a Society, to settle on our lees. This, I found, would not do for me, and I crept along in the way as well as I was able, till the Society was divided; when the Lord was pleased to send Mr. Mather among us, for which I shall have cause to praise Him to all eternity." Here it may be well to permit Mr. Mather to take up the subject. "I was appointed," says he in his life, "for the Epworth circuit in Lincolnshire, which then included Gainsbro', Grimsby, and Sheffield circuits. I left London, August 15th, 1757, to walk to Epworth, about 150 miles. My fellow-labourers were Thomas Hanby, Thomas Tobias, and afterwards Thomas Lee.

It pleased God to give me much of his presence in my own soul, and to let me see some fruit of my labour. This supported me under the various exercises I met with. The first of these was at Rotherham, where John Thorpe, one of our local preachers, had just separated from us. He declared open war against us, particularly opposing what he called my perfection. Yet it pleased God to raise up many witnesses of it—many that loved Him with all their hearts; several of whom are still (1780) burning and shining lights, and several removed into Abraham's bosom. Yea, it was observed, that some of his own hearers, even while he was preaching against salvation from sin, were fully convinced of the necessity of it, and indeed never rested more till they were the happy witnesses of it.* Christian perfection was not the only ground of difference, as appears from an account of Rachel Yates, written by Mr. Pipe. Her husband, says he, "was a man of an unblemished character. He was a hearer of Mr. J. Thorpe, who altered his sentiments, and embraced the predestinarian scheme. Thomas Yates could not receive it, and after a very singular dream, which was repeated three times the same night, he left them, and united himself with our Society at Rotherham, which was not far from where he lived."†

Mr. Myles, through some mistake, states, that John Thorpe departed from us in 1764, and associates him with the *travelling* preachers ‡; whereas the division took place at the present period of the history, and it is certain that he only acted in a *local* capacity. On his leaving us, he first preached in a school-room at Masbro', and then in a chapel built by Messrs. Samuel and Aaron Walker, who left the Methodist Society with him. The old chapel was pulled down some years afterwards, and the present, occupied by the Rev. James Bennett, one of the authors of "The History of the Dissenters,"—a work in which the Methodists are not very handsomely treated, stands upon its site. Previous to John Thorpe's division, there was no dissenting place of worship in Masbro'; he laid the foundation of the dis-

* Meth. Mag. for 1780, p. 149: for a further account of the extent of the Circuit, see Meth. Mag. 1800, p. 551.

† Meth. Mag. 1799, p. 428. ‡ Chronol. Hist. p. 449.

senting interest there. Methodism, however, claims him as her child; and but for her, his religious character had probably been unknown, and his talents have lain dormant. But her spirit impressed his heart, and her peculiar genius brought his talents into action. Had it not been for her fostering care, the neighbourhood of Rotherham,—at least as far as we can perceive to the contrary,—had been deprived of the labours of John Thorpe as a Christian minister, Masbro' of its present place of worship, and the dissenters of Masbro' Academy. There have been obligations on both sides; in some instances the balance has been nearly equal, and in others there may be some discrepancy; where it has not proved equal, such as have imparted the favour have cause to rejoice in the ability and opportunity afforded them of doing good, while the others have cause of gratitude for the benefits conferred. The day has now arrived, however we may differ in opinion, when we can live and love like brothers, and before its close we may be as anxious to promote each other's welfare as our own. Some years after the division, Mr. Samuel Walker gave those publications of Mr. WESLEY's away, which he had purchased when a Methodist, chiefly to Wm. Parkin and Joseph England, two old class-leaders who were in his employ, thus taking his final leave of every thing Methodistical.

Not only were the original works of Mr. WESLEY given away, but the works edited by him, among which were the "Christian Library," some of the odd volumes of which are now in the possession of Mr. B. Wilkinson, of Sheffield, who purchased them of his brother-in-law, Benjamin Longley, one of Mr. Walker's servants, and one who left the Society with Mr. Thorpe at the division. Prejudice in this instance must have been very strong, since the "Christian Library" comprises the works of some of the most popular and pious Calvinistic divines.

Whatever may be the causes of division, the effects are often fatal to the peace of both parties for a considerable time afterwards; and what is generally the case, each party are only awake to their own perfections, and can perceive only the defects of the other. It is rare indeed that blame is not to be attached to both sides; and sorry should the writer be in this instance, any more

than in the differences between John Nelson and Mr. Ing-ham at a more early period, to establish the innocence of the one at the expense of the other. John Thorpe acted no doubt from principle; every other circumstance connected with his character, after his conversion, stamps him a man of God; and though greatly indebted to Methodism, he honestly and zealously endeavoured to repay it in the hard labour of several years. The Methodists ought to revere his memory. Though he drank freely of the cup of joy while he was with the body, he was not unmindful of the Hand that gave it; he did not grow up and flourish like the flower, unconscious of the sun that blesses it; he was a credit to Methodism while he professed its peculiarities; and when he gave up that profession, he did not, like many, forsake his God; he was still in the service of King Messiah, though draughted into another battalion; and he was one of those who were placed in the front of the battle, the advantages of whose victories we are at this day enjoying.

With pleasure the writer records the following anecdote, as one instance, among many, of the effects of John Thorpe's ministry. Once, when it had been announced for him to preach in a certain village, the wife of a farmer, being a pious woman, asked leave of her husband to go and hear him. The farmer, a reprobate man, roughly refused, but she, unwilling to be disappointed, renewed her intreaties from time to time, till, overcome by her importunity, he at length consented, telling her in bitter irony that she might go on one condition,—a condition by-the-bye which he could not expect her to accept, since compliance with it might be fatal to her; it was, that, as the place was at a considerable distance, she should ride thither on a certain vicious horse which he had. The good woman, though sensible of his unkind meaning, and that the permission so given was designed to operate as a prohibition, joyfully and undauntedly determined to venture, being thankful to hear the gospel on any terms. Accordingly she set out, arrived in safety, and joined the congregation in a barn. During the sermon, happening to turn her head, she was struck with inexpressible astonishment to behold her husband's face at the door, where he stood among the crowd, eagerly lis-

tening to the preacher, and in evident agitation of mind, for the tears were rolling abundantly down his hardy sun-burnt cheeks. When the pair met afterwards, at the conclusion of the service, the poor man, with the deepest contrition, acknowledged that, after his wife had left him, being alone, he could not help reflecting on the wickedness and inhumanity of having exposed her life to peril by the restive animal which she rode. He was so shocked at himself, that he quickly followed her, though at a distance, to see what might happen, and to be ready to give her succour, if she appeared in actual danger. When he saw her safely set down among the people, he also joined them from curiosity; but lo, the word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, had pierced through soul and spirit; his conscience was awakened; he was convinced of sin, abhorred himself, and repented as in dust and ashes. The interview between the husband and wife under such circumstances was like death to the former—the death of all his evil life,—for from that time he became another man; and it was new life to the latter; a resurrection from the dead to her in the affections of her partner, in her future hopes concerning him, and in the happiness which thenceforward they enjoyed together, while walking in the ways of wisdom and the paths of peace.

While Mr. Mather was in the Epworth circuit, he drank deep into the Spirit of God. In answer to some questions put to him relative to “the great salvation” experienced by him, he observes, “With regard to the time and place, it was Rotherham, in the year 1757; that I enjoyed it in a far greater measure than I ever did before, or do now.”* He then enters fully into the doctrine of sanctification; and such were Mr. WESLEY’s views of the statement, so clear, so rational, so scriptural, that he added as a postscript, “I earnestly desire, that all our preachers would seriously consider the preceding account, and strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to *go on to perfection*; yea, to expect full salvation from every sin, by mere grace, through simple faith.” Mrs. Green’s experience and testimony, in her diary, are in

* Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 203.

perfect accordance with Mr. Mather's statement:—“When Mr. M. came to the circuit,” says she, “I was in deep mourning for my brother; I was also brought very low, through unbelief, my foolish wisdom, and evil heart; but we had many comfortable seasons together in prayer and conversation, and both experienced a degree of that perfect love, which casteth out all fear that hath torment in it,—a much greater work than that of my first espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Subscribers, a list of whose names is preserved by Wm. Green, were solicited, this year, for Mr. WESLEY's treatise on “Original Sin,” and the copies were delivered the year following at 3s.9d. each.

We know but little, at this remote period, of the exertions of the first Methodists, to rescue their fellow-creatures from ignorance and from vice. Sarah Moor, who now led the class at Hallam, not unfrequently went from Sheffield to Bradwell, in Derbyshire, a distance of sixteen miles, to hold prayer-meetings. There were two old women, Isabella Furness and Margaret Howe, who encouraged her,---probably the fruit of Wm. Alwood's labours in 1753. Marshall Thorpe was the moving cause of Sarah's visits.

The travelling preachers appear to have laboured in love. Mr. Tobias, the least known in the connexion, was a native of Wales. He began to itinerate in 1750, and closed his public labours about 1767. He was naturally cheerful and active; remarkably zealous; and of undoubted piety. Mr. Myles represents him as departing from the *work* in 1767, and Mr. Atmore as departing from *life*.*

1758. Mr. WESLEY's nearest approach to Sheffield in 1758, was Bawtry, near Doncaster; which he only took on his road to Epworth. “I came to Bawtry about six. Some from Epworth had come to meet me; but were gone half an hour before I came: so it remained only to hire horses and a guide. We set out about seven; but I soon found my guide knew no more of the way than myself. However, we got pretty well to Idlestop, about four miles from Bawtry, where we had just

* Chron. Hist. p. 449; Meth. Mem. p. 430.

light to discern the river at our side, and the country covered with water. I had heard of one Richard Wright that lived thereabouts, who knew the road over the Moor perfectly well. Hearing one speak, (for we could not see him,) I called, 'Who is there?' He answered, 'Richard Wright.' I soon agreed with him, and he quickly mounted his horse and rode boldly forward. The north-east wind blew full in our faces (March): and I heard them say it was very cold; but neither my face, nor hands, nor feet were cold, till between nine and ten we came to Epworth. After travelling more than ninety miles, I was little more tired than when I rose in the morning."*

A letter of Sarah Moor's, to Mr. Wm. Alwood, who was then in the Manchester circuit, gives us a partial insight into passing events. It is dated March 6, 1758, Sheffield. After noticing her father's illness, she observes, "Mr. Mather has preached twice to-day; and, blessed be God, we have no disturbance. I see myself so unworthy of the least mercy, that I am ready to say, Why is it, O Lord, that thou hast brought the gospel under my roof? My soul is longing for more of God. I see daily need of holy *living*, that there may be holy *dying*. Elizabeth Mason and Elizabeth Murrow are dead; and Mr. Hanby is ill of a fever, though recovering. We have had Mr. Mather ever since we solicited him to change with you. But Mrs. Mather has come." Sarah then gives an account of a Mrs. Wainwright, who had been brought to God under affliction, whose husband had violently opposed her, but was then so far reconciled as to allow her to visit Miss Moor, though not to hear preaching. She speaks, also, of Jonathan Booth having received a letter from Mr. Alwood. This letter seems to intimate, that Mr. Alwood had laboured in these parts some time previous to this, from his familiarity with the members of Society; which is further confirmed by the frequent recurrence of his name in Wm. Green's account-book; and, accordingly, noticed in 1756. It should seem too, that as soon as the members of Society had been expelled from the house occu-

* Journal, vol. iii. p. 320.

pied by Mr. E. Bennet's party, they were accommodated by Sarah Moor and her mother, and that the place procured in Mulberry-street was either not fully prepared to receive a congregation till after March 6, since Sarah was then rejoicing at having the *gospel brought under her roof*; or, as Mulberry-street house was employed for a school, there might be preaching in it on the Sunday, and at Sarah's on the week day: March 6th was on a Monday *; on that day, Mr. Mather had preached two sermons: one of these was probably at five o'clock in the morning, the other at seven in the evening, periods which would admit of the free use of the school for the children through the day. Monday evening preaching appears to have been customary in our large towns, from the first, where the preacher found it practicable to stay. While he enjoyed a half-day himself, it aided in perpetuating the devotional spirit produced on the Lord's day. Possibly this might be about the period in which the first quarter-meeting was held, as it was held in Sarah Moor's house, Fargate, and the whole of the members of Society appear now to have made it their grand resort.

Mrs. Mather, who is represented as having arrived in Sheffield, was either on a visit from Epworth, or had come from London to her husband, who had walked from thence to his circuit about eight months before; a period of separation between man and wife not at all uncommon in the early history of Methodism, and which, from the father's absence from home, rendered the erection of a public school so necessary. Mrs. Mather was the first preacher's wife who had any *allowance for board, &c.*; and such was the provision in reference to *furniture*, that she had to carry her bed from circuit to circuit.

The aid which Sheffield received, in the course of last year, from others than the Epworth preachers, appears to have been continued; for both Mr. John Hampson and Mr. John Manners have left undeniable evidence of their having spent a considerable time in these parts. While the first of these was preaching in

* Journal, vol. iii. p. 319.

the house of Wm. Woodhouse, of Hallam, there was some disturbance; but instead of employing carnal weapons, which some were disposed to do, he told the turbulent he would "knock them down with the Word of God." One of the principal disturbers was so much influenced in favour of the preacher, in the course of the service, that he stood up and declared that no one should again molest him.

Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, who was now devoted to God, frequently accompanied the preachers to the neighbouring places. In coming from Totley, with Mr. John Manners, where the latter had been preaching, and upon whom the enemies of the gospel had scarcely expended the whole of their malignity, they were assailed by several persons who had lain in ambush to wait their appearing. The principal object of their wrath was the preacher. One of the blows, however, dealt at him, was received by Jonathan Booth, whose breast was wounded by it, and the effects of which he is supposed to have carried to his grave. For several days, he was seriously indisposed. Mr. Manners escaped uninjured: but what he was preserved from here, he met in other places. He was born at Sledmere, near Malton, in Yorkshire, in the year 1731, and experienced the truth as it is in Jesus, in 1755. If Mr. Myles be correct, that he commenced his itinerant life in 1759*, he must have now been a local preacher, and on a visit to the neighbourhood. He was remarkable for his zeal and usefulness; his whole Christian career was a sermon; but the hardships he endured in the faithful discharge of his apostolic office, were too much for his weak constitution, and occasioned his death in the prime of life, in 1763, in the city of York. He left this world in the full triumph of faith.

Totley, a village about five miles from Sheffield, and at which Mr. Manners and J. Booth had been, had received visits from the preachers a little prior to this. Preaching was at first out of doors, generally under a sycamore tree: but it was not long before George Wainwright, the oldest of the three patriarchs, whose

* Chron. Hist. p. 448.

portraits appear in the front of this work, took in the preachers and permitted them to preach in his house. He bore with patience the taunts of the rude, the reproofs of his friends, and the still heavier hand of the outrageous mob. Never could he be induced to turn the Methodists out of doors; and preaching was in the village a considerable time before a Society could be formed. Sarah Green, one of the first members, had a clod of earth thrown at the side of her face; and turning her head round, she received another: "There," said she, without being either grieved or afraid, "you have taken me on both sides." Few places, for the size, had greater disturbances in them than Totley. The people were determinately opposed to every thing in the form of religion; which reflects the greater honour on the man who opened his door for the truth. George was born, January 28, 1714, at Bamforth, about two miles from Hathersage, in Derbyshire. He there learned the trade of weaving, and then removed to Dronfield in 1739, where he lived till 1743. From thence he removed to Totley, and was married in 1744. There he spent a great part of his life; and his next remove was to Whiteley Wood, where he met in class as long as he was able to attend. While at this place, the following paragraph appeared in the Iris of April 25, 1805:— "We are informed that there is now living at Whiteley Wood, near this town, a man called Geo. Wainwright, in the hundredth year of his age. He is a weaver and works at his trade, is stout and hearty, and can walk faster than most young men: he is not short of breath, but (according to our correspondent) is likely to live as long again as he has done." The correspondent of the Iris must either have been incorrectly informed of his age, or George must have died at the great age of 116, instead of 107. On his residence at Dore, during the latter part of his life, he became infirm, and through his non-attendance, his name unfortunately was omitted in the class-paper, which should have continued to the end. At the Jubilee of George III., fifty old men were selected out of the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield, whose separate ages exceeded that of His Majesty's. To these, coats and hats were given. George Wain-

wright was one of them, and, in the language of a friend, “ was king of them all” in point of age. A subscription was proposed to be entered into for the purpose of having his likeness taken, in order to be placed in the Cutlers-Hall. A full-length portrait was accordingly taken, by Schwansfelder ; but the subscriptions not having been paid in, the painting remains in the possession of Mr. Mitchell, of Broad-lane. It was customary for some gentlemen, during the last years of his life, to provide a repast for himself and his descendants, on the anniversary of his birth-day, as a tribute of respect to his age and character. The following is a hymn, sung on his last annual festival, and composed for the occasion, by Mr. John Holland, author of “ Sheffield Park,” &c. :—

“ Before the flood, five hundred years
 Protracted oft the life of man ;
 Now, frail three-score and ten appears
 A very hand-breadth and a span.

“ But He who gave us mortal breath,
 Ordain’d our being, health, and strength,
 Knows best when to arrest in death
 A life of brevity or length.

“ Lord, still thou sparest this heir of heaven,
 In patriarch age, to dwell on earth,
 Surviving five-score years and seven,
 Departed since the pilgrim’s birth.

“ Thousands, born on *his* natal day,
 Who first with him beheld the sun,
 Have smiled, and wept, and pass’d away—
 Their earthly joys and sufferings done.

“ Ah, none of *us* may e’er attain
 Thy servant’s lengthen’d pilgrimage ;
 Yet life or death, with Christ, is gain
 In youth, in manhood, or in age.

“ Till death shall loose the silver cord,
 And till the golden bowl shall break,
 Still may thy ancient servant, Lord !
 Kept by thy grace, thy glory seek.

“ And we, who now surround him here,
 Led by thy mercy, God of truth !
 May we, with him, in heaven appear,
 And crown’d with everlasting youth.”

One thing which tended to awe the people in Totley was, the sudden death of a young man, who, a little before his exit, had been very active as a persecutor, in pulling the preacher from his stand, and offering other acts of violence. It was perfectly unnecessary for serious characters to view it as a judgment; the wicked themselves viewed it as such, and their own comment was not without its salutary effect.

Sarah Moor, who appears to have written to Mr. WESLEY for religious counsel, received the following answer, dated London, November 22, 1758:—

“ My dear sister,
 “ Praise God for what He hath already done. Let those give thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed and delivered from the hand of the enemy: but you know a greater deliverance is at hand. What have you to do, but to fight your way through the world, the flesh, and the devil? It is a good, though a painful fight. Unless you yield, you cannot but conquer. It is true, you will first conquer by little and little. For

‘ More of this life, and more we have,
 As the old Adam dies.’

But there is also an instantaneous conquest: in a moment sin shall be no more. You are gradually dying for a long time. But you will die in a moment. O hasten to that happy time! Pray, strive, hope for it!

“ I am, your affectionate brother,
 “ J. WESLEY.”

CHAP. IX.

An Address to the Churchmen of Beighton—A dialogue—A letter of Mr. Lee's—Mr. Wesley preaches at Sheffield and Rotherham—A particular providence—John Olivers.

1759. THE restless spirit of persecution, so frequently noticed, was still in operation; and no sooner did it appear in one quarter, than it was visible in another. To shew its malignity, and to deter its advocates from their iniquitous practice, Wm. Green found it necessary to address them, a copy of which address he has left among his papers, and is thus expressed:—

“ To the zealous churchmen of Beighton*, who have of late been concerned in stoning and abusing several inoffensive people, for singing psalms and hymns, and praying. These persons were in the house of John White, who, till of late, was a very profane character, but has now turned to God, and is striving for heaven. As self-examination must be acknowledged to be the duty of every Christian, I sincerely desire that every one of you would examine yourselves, and see if you were not, in the late persecution, guided by the same spirit which influenced the breasts of those in former days, who were found fighting against God, though with a view to forward religion. And first of all, read Gen. iv. 8, where we have an account of Cain murdering his godly brother Abel. Was not yours the same spirit? Were you not moved to the work from the very same principle which led the men of Sodom to persecute righteous Lot? Or read Daniel vi. 10, &c.; and see whether you

* Beighton is about eight miles from Sheffield, and is in the neighbourhood of Rotherham.

are not as much, and as unreasonably, prejudiced against the Methodists (so called), as the Babylonians were against him, and were the occasion of his being cast into the den of lions; and what was his crime? He prayed three times a day. Again, were you not influenced, by the same spirit which possessed the persecutors of Christ? Witness the malice of Herod, Matt. ii. 13, who sought to slay Him in his infancy. Witness others who styled Him a madman, and one that he had a devil, John, x. 20. Witness the chief priests, who encouraged the populace to take away the life of the Son of God. And did the apostles meet with better treatment? Read Heb. xi. 36—38. Some met with cruel mockings, some were stoned, some sawn asunder, some reproached; as Noah, David, and many others recorded in Scripture, both prophets and apostles. Look also into the reign of Queen Mary, that woman of blood, and you will find that numbers of men and women were burnt to death with fire and faggot, for no other crime than that of renouncing the errors of popery, and resisting sin and Satan. Let me tell you, that the same spirit actuates you: and before you proceed any further, be pleased to read Gamaliel's counsel, Acts, v. 38, 39, "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel, or this work, be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." You may be certain you are not guided by the Spirit of God. Moses wished that all the Lord's people were prophets (or preachers,) Numb. xi. 29. A person came to Christ with a complaint, that one was casting out devils in his name, and informed our Lord that he had forbidden the man: but what was the reply? "Forbid him not." St. Paul tells us, that even in his day some preached Christ one way, and some another; yet, notwithstanding that, whether in pretence or in truth Christ was preached, he rejoiced therein, yea and would rejoice. I assure you, therefore, it is the most dangerous thing in the world to persecute people on account of religion. You know not but the Methodists may be right, and you wrong: and if so, Jesus says, It were better for thee that a millstone had been tied around thy neck, and thou shouldst have been cast into the midst of the sea, than that thou

shouldst offend one of these little ones. Remember further, that dreadful passage, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive," Matt. xiii. 14. It is added, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing." Recollect, too, that still more dreadful passage, Acts, xiii. 40, 41, "Beware, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." Also, "They shall call upon me, and I will not answer." I could name many other passages to the same purpose, but I would not be tedious. If you think I have not fitly applied these Scriptures to your condition and proceedings, please either to write or speak to me; and you shall have my further opinion. From your's, &c.

"WM. GREEN."

What effect this scriptural address produced, is not recorded; and small are the hopes that can be entertained of any thing permanently good. It is the civil authority alone that can control the actions of a persecutor; and only the grace of God that can root the spirit of persecution out of his heart.

Among the same papers, and written by the same hand, was found the following dialogue between a Churchman and a Methodist. It is not improbable, that it took place between Wm. Green himself and one of his neighbours, and was afterwards committed by him to paper. With others, it furnishes a further specimen of the opinions of the times, and the mode of defence adopted.

"*Churchman.* Pray, neighbour, is something amiss; whither are you going this wet night in such haste?"

"*Methodist.* I am going to hear preaching; shall I have the pleasure of your company?"

"*Ch. No.* I assure you, I have not gotten such itching ears, as to lead me to follow such run-a-gate fellows: and I am really surprised at you, above all people; that you are so deluded, and that, in this age,

you should leave the Church, and have your religion to seek now. I really pity, and am much grieved for you.

[*Off at a side from the rain.*]

“ *Meth.* I am obliged to you for your respects, but much more for the opportunity of a little friendly conversation; for some will rail behind back, and be as smooth as oil to one’s face: therefore, it is honest in you to speak your mind freely, especially in a matter of such great importance. I was once as great a bigot, as full of prejudice, possessed as itching ears, and was as zealous for my Church and my religion, as you can possibly be; and it grieved me to think that government should suffer so many upstart religions, believing them, as I did, to be false. The professors, I thought, had a different look to other people; and, in short, I scarcely had charity for any except our own church party.

“ *Ch.* And why do you leave the Church now? What can you learn more from such illiterate fellows, than you are taught at Church? Are not our ministers more able to instruct than a set of coblers and tailors? Very few of them know any thing of learning, and some of them can scarcely spell their own name, or read a chapter in the Bible. They are only strolling about for an idle life, and to pick people’s pockets. Had I only my will of them, I know what I should do to them; and I advise you to follow them no longer.

“ *Meth.* Out of the abundance of your heart, I have no doubt, your mouth speaks. Learning, I confess, is useful in its place; nevertheless, in a *gospel minister*, there is something still more necessary. Do ministers, I would ask, of the greatest learning, convert the vilest sinners? How many, even in this parish, who have been wicked and profligate, have been reformed and changed by hearing those whom you call learned men?

“ *Ch.* We must hope the best; it is not for such as you to be judges.

“ *Meth.* Pray, let me ask you one serious question or two?

“ *Ch.* Aye, twenty if you please.

“ *Meth.* Well, what have *you* profited by your religion and your learned divines, for which and for whom you are so zealous? I see you are overcome with the

same evil tempers, and are subject to the same wicked practices as you were several years ago. Now, I must tell you sincerely, that you must either change your religion, as you call it, or God must make a new Bible; for ' Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

" *Ch.* Change my religion ! No, no, that I never will.

" *Meth.* Pray, what is your religion ?

" *Ch.* The Church of England is my religion ; and I will never forsake it so long as I live.

" *Meth.* What do you mean by the Church ? for the Church fell upon Paul's neck, and kissed him. Do you mean the building, the doctrine of the Church, or the people ?

" *Ch.* What, are you to be my pope ? Indeed you are very impertinent, but if you would needs know, I mean the doctrine.

" *Meth.* You surely are under mistake ; you no more believe the doctrine of the Church of England, than I believe the doctrine of the Church of Rome.

" *Ch.* The Methodists will not swear, but they will lie, and this is one of *your's* ; disprove it if you can.

" *Meth.* Very good, I will proceed. You believe, I suppose, that, at your baptism, you were taken into the pale of the Church, when it was specified before the congregation, that you were to fight under Christ's banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil ? In your Catechism you promised to forsake the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the present evil world, the lusts of the flesh, to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, to keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life. Now, have you fulfilled your promise ? Further, I ask, is sin a work of God or of the devil ? Does God make you swear, lie, get drunk, fall into passion, and the like ? Is this the practice of a churchman, or of the servants of God ? Certainly not. Read the Scriptures : ' His servants ye are to whom ye obey,' and ' He that committeth sin is of the devil.' And are not you overcome with sin day after day ? If so, you are no member of the Church, but a servant of Satan.

“ *Ch.* You are very provoking. Pray, do you live without sin?

“ *Meth.* That is not the point upon which we are at present. Do you believe it possible to renounce and overcome these works of the devil?

“ *Ch.* If I do sometimes swear, or get too much liquor, I do no one any harm, and I pray for forgiveness.

“ *Meth.* Again; do you renounce the vanities of this wicked world? Do you not frequent horse-races, assemblies, plays, balls; and are not your children also brought up in the same practices, entering them to a dancing-school from the age of ten or fifteen, and all under colour of teaching them behaviour, how to come into a room, &c.? Is this the faith and practice of a churchman?

“ *Ch.* And what harm is there in innocent diversions? Cannot I go to the places named by you without committing sin? The Scripture says, ‘ Be not righteous overmuch,’ and ‘ There is a time for all things.’ I tell you, I like none of your preaching; if people were to take heed to you, they would have no pleasure in their life.

“ *Meth.* This is still wide of the point. So far this is the doctrine of our Church, and the faith and practice of every true Christian. And when you were asked in the next question, Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do what was promised for thee? Your answer was, Yes, verily, and by God’s help so I will, and I heartily thank God for this salvation through Christ. If you will neither believe nor practise this part of your profession, but will consider the Scriptures quoted by you, as giving countenance to you, it is, alas! only a proof that you are still in a state of ignorance: for those texts are only adopted as the language of infidels, as every wise divine knows; otherwise, there is a time when God permits such things to be done. But you only wrest the Scriptures to your own destruction; for God’s Spirit would never indite such things, and immediately contradict them, both before and after, by telling us, that all is vanity, that the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but that the heart of fools is

in the house of mirth. We are exhorted, also, to set our affections on things above, and not on things upon earth, not to be conformed to the world, and to strive to enter in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. There are many things in your articles too, which you do not really credit, though you often say, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Catholic Church, the communion of saints, and the forgiveness of sins.' You either know not what they mean, or flatly deny them.

"*Ch.* I tell you again, if you will not swear, you do something worse: and I insist that you prove before my neighbour, that I flatly deny the articles of the Church.

"*Meth.* Indeed, I fear you cannot bear it; I had therefore much better be going.

"*Ch.* But I insist upon it, otherwise I shall cane you. I will not be thus bullied by such an impudent fellow.

"*Meth.* Well then, let me desire you to be calm, keep down your passion, and preserve your patience. I shall begin with that article, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, that the Holy Spirit is given to Christians in our day? And do you give credit to the other article, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins?'

"*Ch.* When we die, we hope our sins will be forgiven, but not before; and I think it presumption in any one to think otherwise.

"*Meth.* Take notice the next Lord's day, after you have repeated the Confession, and you will find that the minister is enjoined in the rubric to stand and repeat the absolution, 'God pardoneth and absolveth *all* (attend to that word) that truly repent and unfeignedly believe.' Now, as you are a scholar, you must know that these words are in the *present tense*: also in the prayer before the Thanksgiving, 'Though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us.'"

The above is the whole of the dialogue that has been preserved, and there is sufficient of it to shew, that

the writer was as well versed in the Articles, &c. of the Established Church, as the address proves him to have been well acquainted with his Bible. The opposition which the early Methodists experienced from Churchmen, so called, was what might be naturally expected. Mr. WESLEY was a clergyman; he professed an attachment to the Church of England; he laboured to inspire a reverence to her religious rites among his followers; those who were awakened under the ministry of the Methodist preachers were such as had been in some way connected with the Establishment, either as having been baptized within her walls, or as occasional attendants on her ordinances; and after their conversion to God, they still professed their belief in her doctrines, and maintained that they were, in a correctly religious sense, a greater credit to the Church, and more faithful members of her, than they had previously been. Others, in the same state in which they once were, ignorant of the doctrines of the very Establishment of which they professed themselves members, received a standing reproof from the zeal of those with whom they were wont to associate, and were exasperated to find them more quick-sighted than usual. The house was divided against itself. Not so with the dissenters: with them, generally speaking, there had been no previously professed union, either real or nominal: and hence, the opposition from that quarter was less powerful. In the latter case, it seldom amounted to more than a war of words; in the former, carnal weapons were often employed.

In Sheffield, there seemed to be a short respite from violent persecution, and the work of God was in a state of prosperity. Mr. Thomas Lee, who had been stationed in these parts after his removal from Newcastle in 1757*, writes thus to Miss Sarah Moore:—

“ *Ancoats, June 7, 1759.* ”

“ My dear sister,

“ Whom I love in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ! Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I

* Wesley's Journals, vol. iii. p. 299.

received a few lines a good while ago, but there was no account when or where they were written ; but I concluded, when I had thought a little, they might come from you. I hope you are still going on in the good old way. I hope you are thanking the Lord for what He has already done, and are pressing on for greater degrees of grace than you have already received. Be not unmindful of mercies received ; for our unthankfulness is one reason why we receive so few blessings from the Lord. We always have need of prayer ; if we are cold and backward, we have need of it for life and activity. If we are alive and comfortable, we still require it that we may continue so, and increase therein. If we are tossed and tempted, it is no less needful then, that we may stand and come off victorious. And should even our hearts be full of God, still we must pray, that they may be enlarged, and contain more of God in them. By these means, we may always be growing while we are alive in this world ; and without this prayer, and this praise, or both, we shall grow very little in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord.

“ When I was with you last summer, I preached as well as I could, but could not please part of the Society. Yet I am not discouraged. If I come again, will they hear me, think you ? I am glad to find, or hear, that the Lord’s work prospers among you in your New Room. If God favours me with an opportunity, I have some thoughts of seeing you again in Sheffield : if not, I shall be glad in hearing of you at any time. How does the tailor’s wife go on now ? I think they call her Alice Brammah. Has she got her zeal more tempered with grace than formerly ? Has she obtained a clean heart ? If so, she will be milder than when I was with you. Present my love to all ; to your mother ; to Jonathan and Betty Booth ; to Sally Rider and her husband ; and to others, as if named. I am your loving, though unworthy brother,

THOMAS LEE.”

“ P. S. If you cannot find an opportunity of sending me a letter before Conference, please to forward a few lines to Leeds by the preacher ” The letter was directed “ To Miss Sally Moore, at the Old Preaching-room, in Sheffield.”

The correspondence of this good man was always spiritual and instructive; and it was not uncommon at this, and still more subsequent periods, to read the letters of the preachers to the members of Society, in which there were no personal remarks.

A season of joy was now fast approaching, when the members exulted in the expectation of again beholding the face of the father of the great Methodist family. His appearance was always as welcome as the return of spring.

Though a gloom was frequently thrown over the little Societies, in consequence of the hostility manifested by wicked men, Mr. WESLEY's visits, however transient, were like glimpses of sun-shine between days of heaviness, and revived those who were ready to faint. In August, "Thursday 2," says he, "I rode to Sheffield, and preached at one to a large and quiet congregation. I was afterwards desired to visit Mr. Dodge, curate of the New Church. I found him on the brink of eternity, rejoicing in God his Saviour. Thence I went to Rotherham, and talked with five men and six women, (as I had done with many others before in various places,) who believe they are saved from sin. And this fact I believe, that they 'rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.' I believe they feel nothing but love now. What they will do, I leave to God."*

The dying curate whom Mr. WESLEY speaks of as visiting, is the same blessed man whom the first Methodists were accustomed to go from Sheffield to Ecclesal to hear: and one of the "six women" was, in all probability, Mrs. Green. In a letter of Mrs. Sarah Oddie's, Barton Forge, she observes, "I knew not any thing that hindered my deliverance from all sin, unless it were hurrying business in which I was engaged, which took up so much of my time and thought. But being about this time (1759) with Mrs. Green, of Rotherham, while she was more than commonly hurried with business I was convinced, that as she rejoiced evermore, so might I, in any outward state whatever. And the beauty of

* Journals, vol. iii. p. 401.

holiness which I saw in her, made me long for it more than ever."* The influence which Mrs. Green's example had on all who were in habits of intimacy with her, whether domestics or others, was of a truly hallowing nature. The following anecdote respecting a female servant who lived with her several years, and who had received much good while in her service, will help to illustrate a gracious Providence.

The servant referred to, H. M., entered into the marriage state, and became the mother of three children. Being well instructed, and yielding to the grace given, she maintained her piety; but alas! through the negligence of a bad husband, she was obliged to have poverty for her constant companion. On one occasion, a single peck of potatoes, without any thing else, except water, was all the sustenance which she and her three children had for one whole week; of which scanty allowance the husband himself was generally a partaker. Pressed with hunger, and affected with the sight and entreaties of her children, she at length began to remonstrate with the inhuman father, on the impropriety of his conduct, in suffering his family to starve through his indolence. At this, the choler of his ferocious soul began to rise, and burst forth in looks and words, which at once threatened the lives of the mother and children. Driven before the storm of his fury, with one child in her arm, another by the hand, and the third, about five years of age, holding the skirt of her gown, they fled from before his face. While the mother was flying, not knowing whither, the last-mentioned child, in a plaintive tone, asked, "Mammy, where are you going?" Distressed with grief, the mother replied, "My dear, I cannot tell; the Lord direct us." With intreaty, the lovely little creature enjoined, "Do, mammy, turn again." With feelings convulsed, the mother answered, "I dare not!" Immediately, this little girl, as if taking an equal share in the mother's sorrow, ran before, fell down on her knees, and with hands and eyes lifted toward heaven, with moving fervour exclaimed, "O Lord, do tell my mammy where to get a little bread." No

* Meth. Mag. 1781, p. 450.

sooner had she uttered these words, than instantly she rose from her knees, and, with a pathos not to be resisted, cried, “Do, my mammy: do, my mammy, turn again, turn again: God will provide us bread!” Struck with the unusual conduct of the child, she yielded to its intreaty, and returned to her own house. The cruel father was gone. Fixed in a pensive and thoughtful posture, with her youngest child at the breast, a sailor came to the door and implored an alms. “Poor man,” said the starving mother, “your case is sad, but mine is worse: here are three children, two of them are crying for bread, I have not a morsel, nor do I know where to get one.” At such a sight, the humanized heart of the sailor began to melt. “Poor woman,” said honest Jack, “*your*’s is a bad case;” on which, he immediately administered to her necessities, sharing with the fainting mother and her starving offspring, the successes of the day, and leaving her to adore that Providence which had employed the simplicity of her little daughter to guide her into the way of being a partaker of the bounty of others with himself. An overflowing heart had thrown the grateful mother at the feet of His throne, who fed Elijah by the ravens, even before she tasted of the poor sailor’s benevolence.* H. M. lived at a distance from Mrs. Green, when involved in such distressing circumstances; otherwise, she would have tasted of her bounty.

At the Conference, which was held at Leeds about six days after Mr. WESLEY left Sheffield†, John Olivers was stationed here. He remarks, in a letter to Mr. W., “In the year 1759, I received a letter from you, Sir, wherein you told me I was accepted on trial, as a travelling preacher, and was appointed to labour in the Sheffield circuit. I knew not what to do. I thought, ‘My abilities are by no means sufficient; and if I attempt it, I shall only expose myself, and bring a discredit upon the Gospel.’ But I thought, on the other hand, ‘If I do not go, I shall grieve Mr. WESLEY, and fail in my duty.’ After much reasoning, I came to this conclusion, I will go and make a trial; if the Lord owns

* Meth. Mag. 1808, p 505.

† Journals, vol. iii. p. 404.

me, and the people receive me, so long as this is the case, I will stay with them: if they do not receive me, or if I see no fruit of my labour, I will return to my business. Having prepared all things, I set out with much fear, hardly expecting to stay three months in the circuit. I thought certainly they will despise my youth (twenty-seven): but it was far otherwise. They bore with all my weaknesses, and I was kindly received and tenderly treated on every side. I was particularly indebted to two faithful friends, Mrs. G. (Green), of Rotherham, and E. B. (Booth), of Woodseats. They were nursing mothers to me on all occasions. Whenever my mind was burthened, I imparted to them all my trials, and they lifted up my hands. The circuit being long, the preachers seldom saw each other but on the quarter-day. But the people loved us, and we loved one another; so that I got the year through much better than I expected. And I did not run in vain: I did see a little fruit of my labour. But I was not satisfied with this: I wanted all the people to be converted to God. And fearing I took up the place of some more useful preacher than I was, or ever should be, at the close of the year I wrote to you, Sir, desiring I might go home." When Mr. Olivers was on a visit to a part of the Haworth circuit, where he was greatly encouraged by Mr. Grimshaw, he received the following laconic note from Mr. WESLEY:—" You have set your hand to the gospel-plough: therefore never look back."*

One of the first places at which he exercised his ministry, and at which he was rendered useful was, Chapel-en-le-frith, in Derbyshire. Mr. John Allen, who afterwards became an itinerant preacher, had heard Mr. O. preach at Manchester, and requested his father to permit him to come to his house, and preach his mother's funeral sermon. His father consented, and the result was, that Mr. O. went to Chapel-en-le-frith, and preached with good effect to a large congregation. Mr. Allen joined the Society in September. At Chinley there appears to have been regular preaching at this time †. Another opportunity will be afforded for entering a little more into Mr. O.'s personal history.

* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 424.

† Ibid. for 1812, p. 4, 5.

CHAP. X.

*Letters from Mr. Hampson and Mr. Lee—Revival of the work of God—
Harthill—George Story joins the Methodist Society—Mr. Gibbs becomes the object of violent persecution—Mr. Oddie—Mr. Wild—Mrs. Holy—Jeremiah Cocker—A letter from Mr. Mather.*

1759. JOHN OLIVERS, who was now upon the circuit, expressed himself agreeable with his colleagues, who appear to have been Mr. Fugill and Mr. Gibbs, and occasionally Mr. Oddie, the two last of whom are noticed by Wm. Green. He himself was probably one of the successors of Mr. John Hampson, senior. That Mr. H. had laboured in these parts some time prior to this, has been already noticed ; and from him the following letter was received by Miss Sarah Moore :—

“ *London, Oct. 1, 1759.* ”

“ Dear Sister,

“ I should have written to you sooner, and also to other friends, on your side of the country, had I not been altogether uncertain relative to my continuance here. Mr. WESLEY has been about a month at Bristol. When he went, he gave me strict orders to remain in London, to inspect affairs till his return, which was fixed for a week hence. The other day I was informed he had set off for Cornwall ; if so, I shall not get to you so soon as I expected.

“ God has been very gracious to my soul since I came here. Our congregations are very large ; they are greatly increased since the Conference. I am much

blessed in the company, and with the conversation of some of our friends, who profess to be partakers of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. O Sally, pray till you attain what you pursue; even the mark of the prize of your high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

“ ‘ When you find the passage free,
Faithful souls, remember me,’

Who am the least of the followers of the bleeding Lamb,
but your servant for Christ’s sake,

“ JOHN HAMPSON.”

It should seem from this letter, that Mr. Hampson had been appointed to travel here at the Conference, but was prevented from coming; nor is it certain that he came till the Conference after; and there is some evidence of his having travelled here the year succeeding. The preachers that laboured on the circuit were owned of God; and the tidings, as in the present day, were soon sounded abroad. The following is the copy of a letter to the same person to whom the above was addressed, containing some excellent apostolic advice:—

“ My dear Sister,

1759.

“ I received your letter, and am glad to hear that the Lord is still prospering his work among you; and I hope he will continue, and carry on the same good work both in town and country. I doubt not but Satan will work also, and will do all that lies in his power to prevent it; but this may be some comfort to us; Satan is a conquered enemy; the Lord has him in chains, and shall finally conquer, if they continue fighting in the Lord’s cause. While the preachers continue preaching and living the same pure gospel; and the people experience Christ and live as such in all holiness, meekness, long-suffering, and in all tenderness and forbearance one of another, Satan can do little to hurt the cause of God. Tell them all to beware of a hasty unsanctified zeal in religion; for this has often injured the cause they intended to defend and do honour to. Tell them also to beware of whispering, of chit chat, of a talking,

blackbiting spirit: this (wherever it is found) is the very plague of society; and every God-fearing person should mark such, and be careful to avoid their company, as they would avoid the company of Satan, unless it be to speak plain to them. I advise you all to be quick to hear, and slow to speak of the concerns of others. Be sure to learn, and never forget that old maxim, 'Of the dead and the absent speak no evil.' Let every thing contrary to love be finally forgotten, and buried in oblivion. Let love be great, and without dissimulation. I have long ago given over measuring people's real religion by the profession they make of great attainments, and rather look to see, whether they speak calmly, respectfully, and tenderly of all, whether they are patient under all crosses, whether they love all that love Jesus. It is of no importance whether they think *just* as I do, provided they, in lowliness and humility, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; for I must believe that a meek heart will produce a meek life; a loving heart will produce a life of the same kind. We are not to expect a humble heart and a haughty look to be joined together. By our fruits we shall be known in the eyes of all judicious persons. Let you and me, and all who profess to follow Jesus, pray, that we may be enabled to learn of Him who was meek and lowly, and then shall we find rest to our souls. As far as I enjoy the same mind which Christ had, so far I am right, and no further. O let us pray for this mind always, and in all things. I and my wife join in love to your mother. I am, your's, &c. in the dear Jesus,

"THOMAS LEE."

Instead of directing this letter to the "Old Preaching Room" as before, which was now waning in the mind, it was addressed "To Miss Sarah Moore, school-mistress, at Mr. John Rider's, Fargate, Sheffield, Yorkshire." There is no doubt a reference to the unpleasant feeling excited at the separation of the Society from Mr. Whitfield's followers, as it respected their worshipping under the same roof, and which continued to live some time after the occupation of the room in Mulberry-street, where Mr. Lee exhorts the members to bury the

past “in oblivion.” John Rider, to whose care the letter was directed, entertained the preachers at his house; and this was the occasion of several letters being committed to his care, such persons being generally known in the town and connexion.

1760. This was a memorable year for Methodism. It pleased the Divine Being to own, in an especial manner, the ministry of his word, throughout the connexion; and the same extraordinary influence of the Holy Spirit continued in the principal Societies for the space of three years. * Adverting to this visitation of Divine mercy, Mr. WESLEY remarks, “I inquired into the state of the Societies in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. I find the Word of God increases on every side.” † Not only were the larger Societies quickened, but obscure villages. “Just at this time,” says Mr. Geo. Story, “a work of grace broke out in the village (Harthill) where I was born, through the labours of a person remarkably zealous for God. My mother, in particular, was deeply convinced of the truth, which she soon experienced, and retained the life and power thereof to her dying hour. She was much concerned for me, hoping, if I could be brought among religious people, I should, likewise, soon be convinced. She, therefore, by an acquaintance, intreated me to converse with the Methodists. I answered, ‘If my mother desires it, I will visit them with all my heart.’ The first time I entered a Methodist’s house, they went to prayer with me, and for me, a considerable time. I looked upon them as well-meaning, ignorant people, and thought no more about the matter. In a few days they desired I would come and see them again. Considering it was my mother’s request, I went without hesitation. I found four or five persons in the house, with whom I disputed about religion for some hours, till I had fairly wearied them.” They brought their arguments from Scripture, to which he opposed reason. When he was about to withdraw, a female tried him on the ground of *experience*, and asked him whether he was *happy*? He shrunk from this test; conscience said *no*; and conviction fastened upon him,

* Myles’s Life of Grimshaw, p. 37. † Journals, vol. iii. p. 54.

which he never afterwards lost. As a proof of the genuineness of the impressions, he threw all his useless books into the fire, like those who brought their magical books to the feet of the Apostles.

George Story now resided in Sheffield, and was about twenty-two years of age. The members of Society laid close siege to him, not only with a view to be of service to him, but from a persuasion that he himself, once converted to God, would strengthen the brethren, and thus prove an acquisition to the body. He was not easily to be won. While he looked upon them as "well-meaning, ignorant people," he beheld with complacency his own superior attainments. He had perfected himself in geometry and trigonometry; Macauley's short-hand; geography and astronomy, together with botany, anatomy, physic, and several branches of natural philosophy. He could recollect having read over 300 volumes, some of which were large folios, before he attained the sixteenth year of his age. At the age of eighteen, he had the management of a printing-office; had a weekly newspaper to publish, all the paragraphs to select from the public prints, the advertisements to prepare, the press to correct, and the journeymen and apprentices to superintend. This, though laborious, was food for his vanity. The good impressions of which he was the subject in his boyhood, had long been effaced from his heart. To attack him was like assailing a strongly fortified garrison, where the besieged, even when a breach is made, throng to the pass, and dispute it hand to hand, and man to man. The Methodists, however, continued to press upon him with blow on blow, alternately employing prayer, scripture, and experience; the last of which, he no sooner felt, than he stooped and tottered like an oak under the steel of the woodman. His gay appearance had been such as to attract attention; and, according to the statement of old Mr. Woodhouse, many were the prayers which were offered up for him, both in public and private.

Through the ministry of Mr. Fugill, further light was imparted; and Mr. Story says, while he was preaching, he "saw the way of justification and full sanctification so clearly, that he could trace the path as if it

had been a road described in a map." Under the prayer of Wm. Brammah, he felt, after groaning sometime beneath a weight of hardness of heart and guilt, the softening power of Divine grace. He was exhorted to believe; and "on close examination," he observes, "I found that I did believe every truth in the Bible; yet this did not bring a sense of justification. And I durst not think that God was reconciled to me, when I was conscious of the contrary. But the Lord soon brought me out of this dilemma, by shewing me, that to forgive was his prerogative; and to believe was my duty. This believing for salvation, I found was a distinct thing from believing I was saved; I found it implied the lifting up of the heart to the Lord, in fervent prayer, looking to Him with a steady eye and aim; without evil reasonings or vain wanderings; cleaving to Him with all my strength; casting my soul upon his mercy, and depending upon his promises." He further remarks, "Once I lost the peace of God, by attending to a discourse which set justification exceeding high, confounding it with full sanctification. Viewing myself in this false glass, and not finding I had all the marks which the preacher said belonged to one born of God, I fell into the snare of satan; gave up my shield, and suffered myself to be persuaded that all I had experienced of the goodness of God, was a mere delusion. For some hours I was in deep distress, and I saw no way to escape but by returning to the Lord in faith, who then discovered and broke the snare."* The account from which these extracts are taken, and of which further use will be made, was written by himself, and is replete with good sense and discrimination. He seldom speaks in general terms, but enters minutely into the operations of his own mind and the workings of the Spirit of God. Every step he took in religion was strongly contested by the enemy of souls.

In the same proportion that the work of God extended, means were employed by the emissaries of satan to counteract its effects, and injure its most active agents. Mr. Gibbs, who appears to have been a son of thunder,

* Meth. Mag. 1782, pp. 19, 70, 72, 74, 76, 77.

and under whose “alarming discourses” powerful effects were often produced, was one of the principal objects of their malevolence. The mob frequently collected before the door of the preaching-house in Mulberry-street. On one occasion, they were furnished with a bullock’s hide by a butcher, in which they wrapped Mr. Gibbs on his retiring from Divine worship, and in which they rolled him down one of the principal streets. He lost his hat and wig, and had his other apparel torn, as well as his person seriously injured. Some of the friends interferred, but it only added oil to the flames: the present Mr. Dewsnap, of Broom-grove, who was then a boy, and a spectator of the whole, saw his father insulted, his wig torn in halves and thrown among the crowd. When either the fury of the mob had exhausted itself, or Mr. Gibbs had otherwise escaped their grasp, application was made to the magistrates, and several of the ring-leaders were taken into custody: but, through false witnesses, and no great partiality to Methodism on the part of some in civil power, the persecuted preacher was unable to obtain proper redress. This gave the rioters additional licence to proceed with their violence; and no sooner did Mr. Gibbs leave the magistrates, and appear in the street, than they began again to assail him, when he narrowly escaped with his life. His next application was to a magistrate in the country, less hostile to Methodism; and he would have made the persecutors feel the full weight of the law, had not some of the principal members of Society advised the preacher to stay further proceedings. Of Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Atmore is silent in his Memorial; and Mr. Myles, through some mistake, has fixed the commencement of his itinerancy in 1760, whereas we find him labouring in the neighbourhood of Dewsbury, apparently as a travelling preacher, in 1758.* He departed from the work, in 1766.†

Mr. James Oddie, who had formerly travelled in the Sheffield circuit, was now in Leeds, and not unfrequently visited the neighbouring places. In a letter to Mr. WESLEY, he says, “I took twenty-eight persons

* Meth. Mag. 1810, p. 89.] † Myles’s Chron. Hist. p. 447.

into Society at two new places, Maplewell and Kasper, situate between Wakefield and Sheffield. We have also preached at Barnsley, where they are very angry, cast rotten eggs at us, and give us heavy curses. But I think the Lord will conquer them.”* This is the earliest notice to be met with of Barnsley; and which was a greater conquest to achieve than Mr. Oddie anticipated. He remarks, in the same letter, “James Wild has left the round very abruptly, and is gone to Sheffield, intending to keep shop there. No reasonable offence was *given* to occasion so sudden a departure. He has *taken* offence at me. Some time since, we dined together at Mr. Ikin’s. After dinner, he declared, there was no freedom from sin before death. I gave my reasons in as few and mild words as I could, why I thought it might be. This he took as a great offence. I have written to him since, and told him *from my heart*, though I intended no offence, nor thought I had given any, yet I would lay my hands under his feet, if it would do him any good. The Lord knoweth, I would rather suffer any thing, than designedly offend or needlessly grieve any creature in the world. I cannot think of it without tears flowing from my eyes.”†

Mr. Wild, instead of commencing shopkeeper, as Mr. Oddie supposed, began to teach a school, and occupied, after Sutton had left it, Mulberry-street Chapel, a place every way suited for such a purpose, as there was then no gallery in it; and which ablocation of the premises assisted the funds of the Society. Sarah Bingham, of Woodseats, daughter of Elizabeth Booth, with whom the writer has conversed on the subject, was taught in his school. He entered upon the itinerant life, according to Mr. Myles ‡, in 1747. Without supposing Sheffield to have been his native place, and thus occasioning his residence in it, he must have formed some acquaintance with the friends, from having preached here in 1757. William Green states in his account-book for that period, “I paid to Mr. Wild, by order of Mr. Wesley, £3 3s. Od., and was to receive it again out of the book money, which I at first did receive from

* Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 333. † Ibid. ‡ Chron. Hist. p. 449.

Epworth, by S. Bram., which was William Shents, and sent to me by Jonas." We might be led to infer from hence, that Mr. WESLEY was accustomed to relieve the preachers that were in need, out of the profits of his own publications. Mr. Wild, after teaching school some time, died suddenly of apoplexy.

Mr. Oddie, who complained of Mr. Wild leaving the work of the ministry, left others to deplore similar conduct in himself. He was, however, at this time, in a Christian frame of mind: "The Lord Jesus," says he, in the above letter, "is the desire of my heart, and the object of my affections at all times. He many times carries my spirit, all my powers and affections, up into himself without any sensible effort of my own, and fixeth them in God, their proper centre. Sometimes I find a silent stillness, the region of the soul inconceivably calm, and all attention to an in-dwelling and in-speaking God: then I could keep always at the feet of Christ, and weep my life away. No one knows how mean and insignificant I then see myself." Mr. Oddie entered upon the itinerant life in 1746, and was for many years "a burning and a shining light." His natural disposition, which was covetousness, at length overcame him, and he settled in trade at Yarm, in this country, in 1771. He afterwards married, for his second wife, the widow of that excellent man, Mr. Colbeck, of Keighly. This union proved eventually an unhappy one, and a separation took place about the year 1785. He still, however, resided at Keighly, but after that circumstance had no connection with the Methodists. He sunk into great obscurity; and a little before his death united himself to Mr. Atley, at Dewsbury, where he preached a short time, and, it is hoped, finished his course in peace.* There are two sermons in the Methodist Magazine, for 1799, which were previously published by him, in connection with other pieces, in a separate volume, and which do credit both to his head and heart.

About this time, Mrs. Holy, the mother of Thomas Holy, Esq. joined the Methodist Society in Sheffield. She had, till then, been accustomed to attend the minis-

* Atmore's Meth. Mem. p. 300.

try of the Calvinists, though she was no stranger to Methodism. Mr. John Wilson, uncle of Mr. Wilson of Sharrow-moor, was her own brother; he was connected with the Methodists, and built, as has been already noticed, the preaching-house in 1746. Her half sister too, Mrs. Ludlam, was also one of the first members of Society, whose daughter, the widow of the late James Vickers, is still living, and was then exemplary for her piety. From these ancient stems there are yet shoots flourishing in the vineyard of the Lord. On old Mrs. Ludlam's side of the house, there are three great-grandchildren who hold offices in the Methodist Society, one a class-leader, a second a local preacher, and the third a travelling preacher. Of Mrs. Vickers, much might be said. Though she had several advantageous offers of marriage, she declined them all during the life of her mother. She honoured God in her youth, and connected with *that*, the honour of her parents; in consequence of which, she has realized the blessing of God: her days have been long in the land; and chiefly through the instrumentality of Mr. Holy, a kind Providence has followed her hitherto.

Not only were persons of respectability brought to an experimental acquaintance with the truth of God in this revival, but the poorest of the poor; among the last of whom was a young man of the name of Jeremiah Cocker. He had a remarkable gift in prayer; and one evening, at a prayer meeting in a private dwelling, before he was generally known in the Society, he broke out in earnest addresses at the throne of grace. His voice was strange, and being unsolicited, some of the friends were curious to know who the suppliant was, when turning round they saw a young person kneeled behind the door, half covered with rags, and like the Publican, "afar off." A subscription was immediately entered upon, and he soon appeared in other attire. His usefulness, as well as his otherwise chequered history, will appear in the course of the work.

Feb. 10th of this year, Mr. Mather wrote to Miss Sarah Moor's mother, a woman who indulged occasionally in sharpness of spirit. To such a person the letter was very suitable.

“ Dear Sister,

Welborn:

“ Our time is short, and our work is great. It is of the highest importance for us to double our diligence in every respect: 1. In a diligent and hearty practice of all the means of grace, knowing that it is only the diligent hand that maketh rich, and it is the diligent soul that is made fat. 2. Let it be your hourly study to be watchful over all your words, knowing that they who would see good days must keep the door of their lips. 3. Let it be your daily business to war against yourself, destroy with all your might every evil; abhor with all your heart every wrong temper. Give not the least indulgence to those passions which are contrary to the love of God and of your neighbour. Never think or say you do well to be angry, unles it be at sin; and then bear love to the sinner: much less render evil for evil to any, in thought, word, or work; but copy after the example of Him, who, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously. Go thou, and do likewise. Let holiness to the Lord be the motto of all your thoughts, words, and actions. And if you walk by this rule, grace, mercy, and peace be upon you, and the whole Israel of God. I would that you should put these few directions in immediate practice. Pray for me. I am,

“ Your brother and servant for Christ’s sake,
“ ALEX. MATHER.”

CHAP. XI.

Wm. Green escapes persecution at Bradwell; procures a licence—Liberal spirit of the Marquis of Rockingham—Publications—Mrs. Crosby—Letters to and from Mr. Wesley—George Story begins to preach; meets with opposition; grows in grace—The Levick family—Mr. Tizard—Mr. Wesley preaches in the New Chapel at Rotherham; an account of the building—Letter from Mr. Hampson—T. Bryant—The first popular Collection of Hymns and Tunes—Directions for singers.

1760. PERSECUTION continued to stalk abroad; and those who possessed its spirit availed themselves of every untoward circumstance as an argument for their conduct. Wm. Green, of Rotherham, appointed a Sabbath-day to preach at Bradwell, in Derbyshire. An unfortunate young man put an end to his existence a few days previous to it, who, in some of his interviews with them, had spoken to his friends on the subject of religion. It was reported, that the Methodists had driven him to a state of desperation, and vengeance was vowed against the first preacher that should visit the place. The friends being aware of this, stationed themselves in the different roads leading to the town, in order to prevent Wm. Green from entering. They fortunately met with him in time, and he escaped the merciless fangs of the persecutors. Some time after this, Samuel Knutton, another local preacher, who was very popular in that neighbourhood, went from Sheffield, and preached at Bradwell. His reception was favourable. The only temple in which the friends then worshipped, was an old barn.

For the purpose of greater security, William Green went to York and procured a licence, enabling him to

preach ; which document bears the date of this year. This preserved him, in a few instances, from personal insult, where the places themselves were licensed in which he preached. In Rotherham it still continued the “day of small and feeble things.” The *quarterly collections*, as stated in the circuit accounts kept by Wm. Green, amounted through the course of the year to £1 : 10 : 0d., to £1, and once as low as 13s. The Society, however, looked forward to better days, and seriously contemplated the erection of a preaching-house.

Such was the spirit that pervaded the breasts of the enemies of Methodism at this period, that the preachers had frequently to be guarded from place to place by some of the friends. When open violence was not convenient, wanton mischief was resorted to.

Means were employed to infuse the same spirit among the higher ranks in Society. On a public day, when several visitors were at Wentworth House, one of the company, who was warmly supported by others, introduced the subject of Methodism, expressing, at the same time, his astonishment, that the Marquis of Rockingham should suffer the Methodists to plant Societies on different parts of his estate, and even to approach so near as to surround his park. After listening some time to opinions which were pretty freely expressed, and during which a request was made to his lordship to employ his power and influence to check the progress of such schismatical proceedings, he dismissed the subject with—“ You converse like country-gentlemen : are you not aware that the Methodists preach immediately under His Majesty’s eye ?”

In the course of the year proposals were issued for the publication of Mr. WESLEY’s Sermons, and the names of subscribers solicited. The following Tracts were now in wide circulation :—Christian Perfection—A Serious Call to the Unconverted—A Dialogue between a Methodist and his Friend—Distinguishing Marks of the Work of the Spirit—Swear not at all—A Word to a Drunkard—A Word to a Protestant—Baxter’s Aphorisms—Mr. WESLEY’s Journals—Advice to Saints and Sinners—Narratives—Hymns for times of Trouble—Instructions for Children—Forms of Prayer—

United Societies—Remarks on Mr. Church's Address—Thoughts concerning Religion—Appeals—The Life of God in the Soul—View of the Moravian Brethren, &c. Upwards of seventy of some of these were ordered at once; and considering the small number of members in Society, the immense number of books and tracts sold by Wm. Green, on account of Mr. WESLEY, is truly astonishing. Mr. WESLEY's agent in London appears to have been a person of the name of Franks.

Towards the month of September, Miss Sarah Moor received a letter from Mrs. Crosby, a copy of which shall be here inserted, not only because of the pious strain in which it is written, but because of the little openings which such letters afford, though often comprised in one sentence, into the state of the Society, as to prosperity or adversity.

“ Sept. 1760, London.

“ My dear Friend,

“ I TRUST your love will make allowance for my not answering your's sooner, and not impute it to neglect. I am very glad to hear you are pressing forward to the mark; *go on*, and you shall obtain the prize; the Lord whom you seek in this respect shall suddenly come to his temple. March on, nor fear to win the day, though death and hell obstruct the way. Be patient in suffering evil, and diligent in doing good: fight, wrestle, conquer, die, and live *for ever*. Jesus is your strong helper, only be simple, and lie at his feet, and you shall behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and serve Him *without* fear that hath torment, in righteousness and true holiness all the days of your life. ‘ The Lord is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.’ I find him my sun and shield, my light and my defence; yea, my life, the soul of my soul: all, all I want is here. I am surrounded with mercies, and often astonished at his goodness to so poor a worm as me. My dear, help me to praise my gracious Master and my God. And when you are permitted to come into his Almighty presence, remember unworthy me.

"Our Lord is carrying on his work here. I am glad that the work prospers among you, and that my friend was a blessing to you. She is an useful woman. My friend also, the bearer of this, has been a blessing to us. I believe many are sorry for his short stay in London; but we believe his Master will be with him in the country also. I shall set out for Derby about a month hence, but cannot tell you where to direct to. Perhaps you will see Mr. H. again first, who may then be able to inform you, or bring me a letter. My love to your mother, and to all friends.

"I am, your's, in the best of bonds,

"S. CROSBY."

The Mr. H. referred to, was probably Mr. Hampson, who had now left London, and entered upon the Sheffield station. Mrs. Crosby, the writer of the letter, possessed considerable influence in the Societies where she resided. She did not reach Derby till January 8, 1761, the day after she left London; and from the rapidity of her movements, we should be led to conclude that neither the conveyance nor the roads were so deplorably bad at that period, as they are often represented. She represents Derby as "a barren place" for Methodism.* From Derby she removed to Leeds, where she was rendered very useful as a class-leader. It is observed, in a long memoir of her†, that on the day of her dissolution, she said, "If I go now, I have neither doubt nor cloud: I know I am going to glory. I have been asking my Lord for a promise, and he says, *I will never, never leave thee.*" A little before she expired, she said to one that was present, "If I had strength, how I could praise Him!" It is added, by her biographer, "At eight o'clock, without a groan or struggle, she closed her own eyes and mouth, and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. This was Oct. 24, 1804, on the eve of her spiritual birth-day, which was fifty-five years ago, and she was aged seventy-five (within a week). So composed was her countenance, that, when dead, not the least trace of death was discernible in it."

* Meth. Mag. 1806, p 517.

† Ibid. p. 418, &c.

1761. The preaching-house which the friends in Rotherham had in contemplation last year, commenced this. An extract from a letter of William Green to Mr. WESLEY will shew the state of the Society, and the steps which had been taken towards the erection.

“ My dear Mr. W.

“ How acceptable are the few lines I have this day received from you! I have sometimes concluded you did not receive my letter, otherwise you had forgotten us. * * * * *

I hope your Yorkshire friends will have the pleasure of seeing you once more. Do you inquire how the work of God prospers? I can bless the Lord, and say, that our dear Immanuel is working with us, and for us, daily. Jesus has even this day laid his hand on a sturdy rebel, who has been a hearer for years. He possessed much wisdom and little grace: and hence many of us looked upon him as in a very dangerous condition. But the Lord has conquered him, and wounded him in such an extraordinary manner, that he can neither work, eat, nor drink, by reason of the concern he feels for Jesus, for so it has been with him to-day; and I trust the Lord who has thus wounded will heal in his due time.

“ Many have joined our Society of late, and multitudes come to hear; so that what I have long wished for will, I hope, shortly be accomplished, viz. a House for God. The ground work is set out, and hopes are entertained that it will be up in the month of August; and O that it would please the Lord to send you down among us to preach in it the first time! O my dear Mr. W. think—think of the happy days and nights we have enjoyed together in Yorkshire! How often have our cups run over with the love of Jesus, when hearing, singing, and praying. If a drop be so sweet, what will be the fountain where we shall drink for ever? Come, my dear Sir; I will put the people again in remembrance to pray for you; and I hope the Lord will put it into your heart to visit us once more in the summer. Please to favour me with a line the first opportunity.”

The answer to this letter is not to be found; but one

of Mr. WESLEY's to Sarah Moor, dated March 3d, 1761, supplies its lack of service.

“ My dear Sister,

“ I HOPE to spend a night or two with you at Sheffield, in my return from Newcastle. Probably I may see Hallam too. I am glad to hear you are athirst for God. Look for Him. Is He not nigh at hand? Beware of unbelief. Receive a blessing now! I am,

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

This was some encouragement to the friends, as Mr. WESLEY had omitted to visit Sheffield and Rotherham the year preceding.

By this time, George Story began to exhort in public, under whom several persons were brought to God. Writing of this period, he remarks *, “ A scene opened which was both painful and profitable: we took an old chapel in a neighbouring village, the inhabitants of which, in general, differed very little to the savage Indians. Here I frequently preached to large congregations, and met with plenty of persecution for my pains: but it was not unexpected, and I was determined to stand it, though it should cost me my life. One of them, a popish gentleman, hired some men to pull me out of the pulpit; though I was ignorant of their design, I providentially fixed my eye upon them as they came in. They were confounded, and stayed peaceably till the service was over. Sometimes the mob revenged themselves on the door and windows, throwing whatever came next to hand; and then followed us through the street with mire and dirt. At an adjoining village, where I was to preach, some had engaged a madman; and to qualify him more perfectly for the work, had made him drunk. He came armed with a large club, and raging in a most furious manner. I was waiting calmly for the event, when the man's wife came, and having endeavoured in vain to persuade him to go away, fell into violent fits. Seeing this, he instantly became

* Meth. Mag, 1782, p. 122.

as quiet as a lamb, and we returned without the least injury."

Though these are the only instances of disturbance recorded by Mr. Story, in this neighbourhood, in which he was personally interested, some of the old members of Society have not failed to notice others. Owing to the general certainty of disturbance during the service in the preaching-houses, the preacher was in the habit of noticing to his auditory that he had a license, that the magistrates would not allow them to be insulted with impunity, and that such and such a Session was at hand. We have seen in other instances, and shall have repeatedly occasion to mention, of the little dread in which the secular arm was then held, and the little reverence which was then had, for what their ignorance perhaps prevented them from knowing to be a religious assembly. One afternoon when Mr. Story was preaching in Mulberry-street Chapel, a notorious disturber from Attercliffe walked up the middle of the room with a large stick in his hand, and aimed a blow at the preacher with considerable violence, who only evaded the stroke by falling back in the pulpit. "Sirrah! thou canst not make good what thou sayest," was vociferated by the drunkard, who, when he was caught by some persons present, to be carried out, roared and struggled like a lion.—About the same period, he went to preach at Norton, about three miles from Sheffield, in company with some friends. The clergyman, who was apprized of the visit, headed several persons and drove them out of the village, forbidding them to repeat their intrusion. Alice Brammah, who possessed a good deal of courage and zeal, said, "We purpose returning, but it must be when *our Lord* sends us." The minister, either misunderstanding her, or not giving her full credit for her adoption into the family of heaven, returned, "Your Lord, *your Lord*, I neither care for you nor your Lord, and it will be to your advantage if you never come again."

G. Story, amidst all the opposition he met with, continued to improve in piety. After experiencing considerable depression of spirit, he says, "I was then one evening meeting my *band*, when the power of the Lord

descended in an uncommon manner, and I believed He had purified my heart. At first I rejected it under a sense of my unworthiness. But the witness again returned. I considered, ‘What have I either done or suffered, that could induce the Lord to shew me this great mercy?’ And I was upon the point of giving up again, when it occurred to my mind, ‘By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.’ I was then constrained to acquiesce, and said, since it is so, I will hold fast if I can. The promises, in the latter part of the 30th chap. of Ezekiel, were applied in such a manner as left no doubt but the Lord had wrought that great change in me. Nevertheless, it was not in the manner I expected. I supposed a soul saved from all sin, would be a great, wise, and glorious creature; whereas I found myself infinitely little, and mean, and base: I had such a discovery of my own nothingness, as humbled me to the dust continually. I felt myself as ignorant and helpless as an infant, and knew I could not stand a moment without the Divine aid. Nor did I find such overflowings of joy as I expected, but only an even permanent peace, which kept my heart in the knowledge and love of God. Mean time several scriptures were opened to me at once; and I found a delightful relish for the whole. But still I found, knowledge in divine things was to be acquired gradually, through patient labour; and that even this was limited: God giving no more than was necessary, and at such times as he pleased.”*

Among other places visited regularly both by local and travelling preachers, was the village of Eyam, in Derbyshire. John Levick, who died June 19, 1822, and met in the class of which Samuel Ironside is leader; heard preaching at this time in the house of Joseph Bennison, a zealous Methodist, who also died in the faith. He then resided at Eyam. George Levick, of Hunsfield, who had been long a member of the Society, was brother to John; and so also was Samuel, who was now a local preacher. The late George Levick, of

* Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 124.

Sheffield, of whom some notice will be taken, was nephew to these three brothers. The family were originally from Hunsfield. John Oliver was the first preacher John Levick heard; and about this period he sat under the ministry of Mr. G. Tizard, as well as Mr. Hampson.

As Mr. WESLEY had given the friends in these parts some reason to believe, that he would visit them in the course of the summer, he was occasionally reminded of his promise. In answer to a letter of Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats, he writes,—

“ *Sunderland, May 29, 1761.* ”

“ My dear Sister,

“ It is a long time to the first of August. Before that time, many of us may be in Abraham’s bosom. If I am at Sheffield that morning, very probably I may be at Woodseats the same day at noon. I do not know but George Tizard may be on that round some time longer. O what cause have we to praise God for all the wonders he has wrought! I am, with love to brother Booth,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ J. WESLEY.

“ I return to Newcastle in a day or two.”

Mr. Tizard, of whom Mr. WESLEY speaks, had been engaged as a mountebank, some time previous to his conversion to God. Having heard that Mr. Whitfield was going to preach, and that he had but one eye, he took some stones with him to deprive him of the other. In this he was thwarted, for the word of God reached his heart, and conquered his enmity. He began to itinerate in 1758 or 1759; but such were the sallies of wit in which he indulged, that it was impossible for a congregation to remain serious while he was preaching. The consequence was, that he soon left the body. This was the last circuit in which he travelled. He then became a minister among the Baptists: some time after which, and by a perfectly mountebank manœuvre, he procured episcopal ordination. The Bishop who ordained him, informed him, that he intended to send him

to the “Island of Providence.” Tizard smartly replied, “I am glad of that, my Lord, for I have lived *there* all my life.” Thither, he accordingly went, and officiated not only as a clergyman, but as a justice of the peace; and there he died.*

The time at length arrived for Mr. WESLEY’s return from the north. He observes, “Monday, (July 27,) I preached at Staincross about eleven; about five, at Barley-hall; the next morning at Sheffield. In the afternoon I rode on to Matlock bath. The valley which reaches from the town to the bath, is pleasant beyond expression. In the bottom of this runs a little river; close to which a mountain rises, almost perpendicular, to an enormous height, part covered with green, part with rugged and naked rocks. On the other side the mountain rises gradually, with tufts of trees here and there. The brow on both sides is fringed with trees, which seem to answer each other. Many of our friends were come from various parts. At six I preached standing under the hollow of a rock, on one side of a small plain, on the other side of which was a tall mountain. There were many well-dressed hearers, this being the high season; and all of them behaved well; but as I walked back, a gentleman-like man asked me, ‘Why do you talk thus of *faith, stuff, nonsense?*’ Upon inquiry, I found he was an eminent deist. What, has the plague crept into the Peak of Derbyshire?

“Wednesday 29, I preached at five, near the bath; in Woodseats at two; and in the evening at the end of the house in Sheffield, to thrice as many people as it would have contained. Thursday and Friday I preached at Rotherham, in the shell of the new house, which is an octagon. The congregation was larger than ever: the Society well united, and much alive to God.”

From thence he went into Lincolnshire, and then returned to Syke-house, August 6. He says, “I preached about nine, at Hatfield Woodhouse, and about one, at Syke-house, to far the largest congregation that has been seen there for many years. Boast who will, that ‘Methodism (the revival of true religion) is just

* Atmore’s Mem. p. 426.

coming to nothing,' we know better things, and are thankful to God for its continual increase."*

The friends at Rotherham proceeded with the octagon preaching-house, which Mr. WESLEY, as has been noticed elsewhere, held up as a perfect model to all other chapel-builders, but to which, in the latter part of his life, he was scarcely so partial. Having consulted the documents respecting the building, the writer is enabled to lay before his readers the following abridged account. At the head of the details is written, "Monies laid out about the preaching-house in Bunting-croft, for land, materials, and workmanship, in the year 1760, by me, Wm. Green." After a particular account of every item, then follows the expense of £235 : 16 : 3½d. Succeeding this, is a statement of monies received; dated and signed, "August 29, 1763: a just account of the monies received of the subscribers, from the Conference, and also materials sold by me, Wm. Green:" to which is added the names of the subscribers, and the amount of their separate subscriptions, with a grant of £20 from Conference in 1761, and another grant of £19 from the same source in 1763; the whole of the receipts amounting to £107 : 14 : 0d.; leaving a debt of £128 : 2 : 3½d. To these particulars another account is appended, which runs thus,—"The whole amount of the monies laid out in the preaching-house at Rotherham, from 1761, to August 2, 1763, for the ground, building, vestry, plastering the ceiling, out-building, fence walls, &c. just £271 : 10 : 10d. Received by subscription and from Conference, £120 : 16 : 1d; still due £150 : 14 : 7d., with an addition of interest of £9 : 12 : 6d." The question is then asked, "What must be done in regard to the interest?" to which is subjoined, "Although there are Quarterly Collections, they do not amount to one half of the interest for the year."

William Green, upon whom the principal part of the responsibility devolved, and who was unremitting in his attention to the building, had his own troubles with the persons employed. The Society was poor—buildings of that description were new in Methodism—there was

* Journals, vol. iv. p. 79, 80.

a difficulty in getting persons to engage in the work, lest they should never be paid, such was the general opinion that prevailed; this backwardness drove the Methodists to submit to almost any terms of workmanship, and every advantage was taken by unprincipled men. One instance is recorded of a Christopher Vintin, of Deepher, who agreed with William Green, "To bring pavers at 10s. 6d. per sixteen yards, including their being squared and laid down." Vintin demanded the money on every cart being unloaded; and brought, by his own account, one hundred and twenty-nine yards, but when measured, only one hundred and nineteen. However, he received the money, and kept it, which to him was both law and justice.

At the Conference, which was held in London, and began September 1, Mr. Hampson was removed thither, from whence he wrote to Sarah Moore, October 13. After giving some directions respecting some printed letters which were to be forwarded, he says, "O Sally! I have great cause to thank God for coming to London. I have a little room, a few select friends, and often, blessed be God! very often, the presence and blessing of my Saviour to make me happy. Tell Mrs. Green, when you see her, I have now no objection to preaching. I preach more than any of our friends in London. I hope you and the rest of my dear friends at Sheffield are pressing towards the prize. God help you so to run, that you may obtain. Commend me affectionately to your mother, and all friends, particularly to J. Booth, John Rider, Henry Alsop, John Butler, and James Walker. And believe me, your's, &c.

"JOHN HAMPSON."

Every source of information has failed relative to the preachers stationed in these parts at the Conference, except one; and the only person noticed is Mr. T. Bryant, who, from William Green's account, was here January, 1762. It is very likely he was stationed here, and after the interval of a year, as will be further observed, returned to the circuit; which may, in some measure, account for the ascendancy he gained over the minds of the people, at the division of 1764.

A parcel of books was receiyed by William Green, in the latter part of this year, amounting to £9 : 7 : 11d.; which was soon followed by another; and in these parcels were a number of copies of the famous Hymn Book of 1761, which is now rarely to be met with. The copy now before the writer, and with which he has been favoured by T. Holy, Esq., being the one in which he was taught to sing the high praises of God a short time after its publication, is entitled, "Select Hymns: with Tunes annexed: designed chiefly for the use of the people called Methodists. London: Printed in the year 1761." In this book are to be found *Cornish*, and all the other fine old *tunes*, so admirably calculated to inspire a spirit of devotion, and which would never have become *old*, if they had not been *excellent*, but which are now seldom heard, being supplanted by many much inferior. It may not be a little gratifying to some to know, that one of the tunes in the volume is entitled **SHEFFIELD**. The collection produced a good effect in these parts, and by the "Tunes annexed," every worshipper became acquainted with his notes. Mr. WESLEY's object in this publication will be best understood by a reference to the Preface.

"Some years ago," says he, "a collection of tunes was published under the title of *Harmonia Sacra*. I believe all unprejudiced persons who understand music allow, that it exceeds, beyond all degrees of comparison, any thing of the kind which has appeared in *England* before; the tunes being admirably well chosen, and accurately engraven, not only for the voice, but likewise for the organ or harpsichord.

"But this, though it is excellent in its kind, is not the thing which I want. I want the people called Methodists to sing true, the tunes which are in common use among them. At the same time I want them to have in one volume, the best hymns which we have printed: and that, in a small and portable volume, and one of an easy price.

"I have been endeavouring for more than twenty years to procure such a book as this. But in vain: masters of music were above following any direction but

their own. And I was determined, whoever compiled this, should follow my direction : not mending our tunes, but setting them down, neither better nor worse than they were. At length I have prevailed. The following collection contains all the tunes which are in common use among us. They are pricked true, exactly as I desire all our congregations may sing them : and here is prefixt to them a collection of those hymns which are (I think) some of the best we have published. The volume likewise is small, as well as the price. This therefore I recommend, preferably to all others."

There are one hundred and thirty-two hymns in the volume, which form the first part. After an index to the hymns, the gamut, and other instructions for learning music follow ; and then the tunes appropriated to the several hymns, with an additional index. The volume, which it might be useful to republish as a corrective to the vitiated musical taste which prevails in some of our congregations through the kingdom, closes with, "That your singing may be more acceptable to God, as well as the more profitable to yourself and others, be careful to observe the following directions :—

"1. LEARN *these tunes* before you learn any others ; afterwards learn as many as you please.

"2. Sing them *exactly* as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all ; and if you have learned to sing them otherwise, unlearn it as soon as you can.

"3. Sing *all*. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you ; if it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing.

"4. Sing *lustily* and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep ; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sung the songs of Satan.

"5. Sing *modestly*. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinctly from the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony ; but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

“ 6. Sing in *time* : whatever time is sung, be sure to keep it. Do not run before or stay behind it ; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can ; and take care you sing not too slow. This drawling way naturally steals on all who are lazy, and it is high time to drive it out from among us, and sing all our tunes just as quick as we did at first.

“ 7. Above all sing *spiritually*. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself or any other creature. In order to this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually ; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve of here, and reward when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.”

These directions could not fail to produce good congregational singing ; and this is what is much wanted. We can no more sing by proxy, than we can pray by proxy. We must praise God for ourselves.

CHAP. XII.

Account of Messrs. Rankin, Nelson, and Clough—Mr. Wesley preaches in Sheffield—George Story proposed to travel—Moorby-street Chapel enlarged, with some peculiarities—James Vickers—An exemplification of brotherly love—Preaching at Doncaster—Messrs. Bryant, Levick, and Brammall—Mr. Whitfield preaches in the Methodist Chapel—A letter from James Clough—Wm. Pennington—Mr. Bryant frustrated in an attempt to dissolve a meeting—A pulpit controversy—Mrs. Brammall's visit to Cornwall.

1762.—In a memoir of Mr. Thomas Rankin, written by himself, he remarks, “I went to the Conference, held at Leeds, in July, 1762, where I was appointed to the Sheffield circuit, and had for my companions John Nelson, Wm. Ingill, and James Clough. The Sheffield circuit, at that time, extended to Leicester on the south, and beyond Barnsley in the north. The work of the Lord prospered, but particularly in Sheffield and Rotherham. Many were added to the Society, and several brought to know the justifying and sanctifying influences of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, with several other places, particularly partook of the revival.”* Mr. Rankin, who commenced the work of an itinerant preacher only a few months before he arrived in these parts, was born at Dunbar, in the shire of East-Lothian, in the year 1739. After preaching the gospel in England, he embarked for America, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Webb, and Messrs. Shadford and Yerbury, in 1773; where he remained upwards of five years, and then returned to his native country. He continued to itinerate till 1783, when he was appointed a supernumerary for London. He died May 17, 1810, full of years and full of grace. While he was here, he laboured with success. “I had

* Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 728.

not been long in the round," says he, " till God broke into my soul with such power, as totally removed all my doubts and fears of my call to the work I was engaged in, and made the word a blessing to many souls. Indeed, for several months, wherever I went, the word of God was like a flame of fire; and I found a restoration of that close communion with God, that I had experienced some months before. In the midst of this prosperity from within and from without, some persons in the round began to cavil at the doctrine of Christian holiness: at first, I was grieved for the souls that were hurt, and then was tempted to oppose them who were opposing the work of God. What through grief and temptation, my mind was hurt, and something bordering on resentment took place: and, although I did not lose a sense of the presence of God, yet I lost that constant witness of Christ being all in all to me." *

John Nelson was well known in the neighbourhood; and it must have been a source of great satisfaction to the friends, to have one appointed to them to mature the good work which had been fostered by him in its infancy. Of Wm. Ingill, not any thing can be said: he is not once named either by Mr. Myles or Mr. Atmore. James Clough, the last preacher noticed by Mr. Rankin, who was in the *round*, as circuits were then called, came originally from Rochdale, in Lancashire. He entered on the work of the Methodist ministry in 1763, according to Mr. Myles, and in 1760, according to Mr. Atmore; the last statement is probably the most correct. He desisted from the labours of an itinerant life in 1774, and settled at Leicester, where he acted in the capacity of a local preacher to the period of his death, which took place in 1795. †

Very soon after the appointment of these good men to the circuit, Mr. WESLEY paid a visit to Sheffield. He says, " Sunday, August 15, I preached about one at Birstal, and in the morning and evening at Leeds. I then rode about eighteen miles: on Monday morning I preached at Sheffield, and in the evening came to Derby. I had sent word, that I did not intend to

* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 195.

† Meth. Mem. p. 75.

preach. But after I had rested a-while in my chamber, coming down and finding the house full of people, I spoke to them half an hour in a familiar manner, and then spent some time in prayer. I believe God touched some of their hearts. Indeed it seemed none were unmoved." * There is a difference as to the precise time in which the Conference was held, between Mr. WESLEY and Mr. Rankin. The latter states it to have been held in July, and the former, in the same page from whence the extract has just been made, informs us, that it commenced Tuesday, August 10. Mr. WESLEY very likely published from his MS. journal written at the time, and Mr. Rankin depended upon memory, after a lapse probably of some years.

It was at this Conference, that George Story, who had now laboured some time as a local preacher, was proposed to travel. His own account of the circumstances which led to it is as follows:—" The Conference being at Leeds," says he, " I attended with a design of edifying by the public discourses and private conversation of the preachers. And herein I had abundant reason to be satisfied. Mr. WESLEY's sermons were in a peculiar manner calculated for establishing me in what I had lately experienced. During the Conference it appeared there wanted several more preachers as itinerants, in different circuits. My friends proposed me for one, and asked if I had any objection. As I was resigned to any station Providence seemed to point out, I submitted to the judgment of my brethren. Being admitted on trial, I returned home to settle my affairs; and in the latter end of February, 1763, I went into the Dales circuit." †. This worthy man continued to travel in various parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, till the year 1792, when he was appointed editor of the Methodist Magazine, and other publications, and a few years after superintendant of the printing-office, the duties of which departments he discharged to the satisfaction of the Conference, and to his own credit, till his various infirmities rendered it necessary that he should be released from them. He was a successful preacher;

* Journals, vol. iv. p. 125.

† Meth. Mag. 1782, p. 126.

and this is not surprising, if we are to take the excellent sermon as a specimen of his discourses in general, which is published in the Methodist Magazine for 1799 *, entitled, “The Scriptural Method of Believing in order to obtain present and eternal Salvation,” founded on John, vi. 22. His piety was genuine, and uniformly evidenced by an unblameable life and conversation. In his views of Christianity, in all its branches, he was clear and correct, and in his attachment to every part of Methodism, he was steady. The weakness attendant on age came very gradually upon him, till within a few months of his death, when his strength of body and faculties of mind decayed apace. His end was as peaceful and serene, as his life had been meek, gentle, and temperate. A short time before his death, to a friend who asked him concerning his prospects into eternity, he said, “I feel Christ to be more precious to my soul than ever.” He died May 22, 1818, in the 80th year of his age.† Mr. Southey, in his Life of Mr. WESLEY †, pays him a high compliment, and considers him the only instance among the Methodist preachers of one living in the midst of enthusiasm without being affected with it.

1763. Through the increase of members referred to by Mr. Rankin, and with them an increase of hearers, an enlargement of Mulberry-street preaching-house was proposed; and in this, the Society found a friend in the mother of Thomas Holy, Esq., who appeared to have been raised up both by Providence and grace to be ready for this “time of need.” When the old building was first entered upon, it was much prized with its un-plastered walls; but now, instead of twelve yards by ten, it was to be enlarged twelve yards by eighteen, with the addition of a gallery, of which it was destitute before, the same pillars supporting both roof and gallery. Mrs. Holy was to lend the money requisite for this enlargement, and T. Holy, Esq. well recollects the pleasure he took in viewing the building after it was completed. The males and females sat apart, each occupying their distinct sides of the building, a custom generally observed in the early stages of Methodism; and

* P. 8.

† Meth. Mag. 1818, p. 553, 704.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 145—153.

the seats were without backs. While the first obviated in a great measure the reproaches thrown upon the first Methodists, the latter promoted wakefulness during preaching. Both of these were agreeable to rule. “Q. Is any thing farther advisable with regard to these houses? A. In all future buildings, let all the windows be sashed, opening downwards; let there be no tub-pulpits; and no backs to the seats. Q. Should the men and women sit apart every where? A. By all means. Every preacher should look to this.”*

In the course of this year, Jonathan Booth, of Woodseats, entered on his eternal rest, and left a widow and nine children to lament his loss.

The same prosperity which characterized Sheffield in 1762, distinguished it in the present year. In a letter from Mr. James Oddy to Sarah Moore, dated Bristol, February 5, 1763, he observes, “It gives me joy to hear, that the great and good work prospers among you; and particularly that you desire for yourself, ‘to sink into humility and rise into the life of God.’ The way to ascend is to descend. There have been here some conversions lately, and some quickening their pace towards perfection; and one is now dying in a most triumphant and glorious state.”

Among those who joined the Methodist Society at this time, were the late Mr. James Vickers and his wife; the latter of whom died in 1802, and the former, April 11, 1809. Such was the general poverty of the Society when they became members, that it was found impracticable to pay a person for taking care of the chapel; and hence the principal members kept the key, locked and unlocked the doors alternately. The few persons who possessed property had large demands made upon their benevolence from various other quarters.—It was from James Vickers, that the Britannia metal, so much admired, and in such general use, received its name; his son, Mr. John Vickers, now carries on the business, in Garden-street. When James Vickers first became a Methodist, he had to participate in the treatment received by the Society from the profligate part of the

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 49.

inhabitants of the town. On one occasion his temper was not a little tried by having a bucket of bullock's blood thrown upon a suit of new clothes which he had put on for the first time. But he met the storm like a Christian, and came out of each succeeding one the same in substance in which he entered. He was the first who set on foot, and was one of the principal subscribers to the Sunday-School in Garden-street, built in 1789, and now in the occupation of the Established Church. The last fourteen or fifteen years of his life were chiefly devoted to the interests of public charities, such as the Infirmary, Sunday-Schools, &c.

It is pleasing to reflect on the ardent desire which was awakened in the breasts of many for the salvation of others. John Burdett, who was now a leader in the Society in Sheffield, felt a serious concern for the salvation of his brother-in-law, Mr. Thomas Scales, then of Brierley, near Barnsley. Mr. Scales, together with his wife, visited Mr. Francis Burdett, of Fall-head, near Silkstone, his father-in-law. John had frequently spoken to Mr. Scales on the subject of personal religion, but to little purpose. He on this occasion induced Mr. Joseph Shaw, of Staincross, to accompany him to Fall-head. Their intention was, if possible, to procure an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Scales on the things of God; but on their arrival in the evening, he was engaged with several other persons playing at cards; they sent for him into another room, saying they wished for his company. On hearing their desire, and knowing well their intention, conviction seized his mind; and he instantly threw down the cards, and resolved from that moment never to be found more with such company or in such employment. He then went to them, and they began to speak to him on divine subjects, as they deemed him able to bear the same, proposing a variety of questions, that they might judge of the real state of his mind, and how, in the most effectual manner, to direct their discourse. After conversation of considerable length, they perceived that God had begun a good work in his heart, as many of his answers discovered a degree of religious light, and a real concern to flee from the wrath to come. The impressions already made upon his soul were, by

this conversation, which lasted some hours, very much deepened ; and on his return home to Brierley, he took the cards then in the house and committed them to the flames, determining they should no more prove a snare either to himself or others. He soon afterwards joined the Methodist Society, in which he continued a member to the day of his death, which took place June 23, 1814, in the 81st year of his age. Some of his last words were, “I find my Jesus to be a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” He requested the friends who attended him, just a little before his death, to lift him up and set him upon his feet: when they asked the reason, knowing his extreme weakness, he replied, “To praise my God once more.”* Mr. George Sargent, who has given a short memoir of Mr. Scales, states, through some mistake, that Messrs. Peter Jaco, Paul Greenwood, and Christopher Hopper, were the preachers now stationed on the Sheffield circuit.†

Mr. WESLEY’s nearest approach to Sheffield this year, was Doncaster, at which place he preached. Frequently as he had passed through that populous town, this is the first time in which preaching is recorded ; and as it is often noticed afterwards, we may infer that this was the first favourable opening he had for the purpose of addressing the people, and that soon after a society was formed. “Wednesday, June 15, I rode to Doncaster,” says he, “and at ten, standing in an open place, exhorted a wild, yet civil multitude, to seek the Lord while he might be found. Thence I went on to Leeds.”‡

At the Conference held in London, July 19—23, Mr. Thomas Bryant was appointed for the Sheffield circuit, as one of the preachers for the year : and Samuel Levick and William Brammah, who had both filled the office of local preachers in the circuit, were proposed to travel. Samuel Levick was brother to the late John, and uncle to the late George Levick, of Sheffield. He was a young man of genuine piety, and zealous in promoting the interests of religion in the world. In a letter from Sligo, where he was in 1767, we read, “Brother

* Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 127, 128. † Ibid. p. 127. Journals, vol. iv. p. 154.

Lewick has been in this circuit for half a year, and the blessing of God seems to attend his labours. Several of the army here, and a few of the town's people are awokened; some of whom are lately come to an experimental knowledge of the truth."* He continued faithfully to preach the gospel, till in 1771 the Lord was pleased to take him to his great reward. His death was more than peaceful—it was joyful. His name, through a typographical error, is spelt Lerick in Mr. Myles's History, and the period for the commencement of his itinerancy is fixed for 1753, instead of 1763.† William Brammah's first appointment was to Redruth in Cornwall, to which place he journeyed, leaving his wife in Sheffield.

Though Sheffield had long been considered the head of a circuit, yet it was not till this Conference it was published as such to the world, as included in the thirty-one circuits into which the three kingdoms were divided.‡

"Either a little prior to, or after the Conference, Mr. George Whitfield visited Sheffield, and preached in Mulberry-street Chapel. A person who heard him preach, informed the writer that his text was, "And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement," Rom. v. 11. In applying the subject, he told his auditory, that it was probable many of them had the register of their natural birth in their Bibles, and possibly some of them the period when they were "born again;" but a point of prime importance, and a question which they should be able satisfactorily to answer was, "Am I born of God now?" From Mr. WESLEY's account of him, who had seen him in Edinburgh in the month of May, he must have been ill able to sustain the duties of the ministerial office. "I had the satisfaction," says he, "of spending a little time with Mr. Whitfield. Humanly speaking, he is worn out. But we have to do with Him, who hath all power in heaven and earth."||

James Clough, of whom something has been said, and who left the circuit at the Conference for Ireland,

* Meth. Mag. 1783, p. 444. † Ibid. p. 448. ‡ Myles's Hist. p. 100.
|| Journals, vol. iv. p. 149.

writes thus from Dublin, September 4th, to Sarah Moore: "May grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied to you. We had a very rough passage, and no one was so sick as myself. I labour under the effects of it now, but hope I shall soon recover. The people at Dublin I like exceedingly well, and I hope my coming here will be attended with a blessing to my own soul. God grant it may prove so to the souls of others! I find my soul alive to God, and have this determination—to know nothing save Christ and him crucified." Sarah, there is no true happiness but in God. As you are brought into the light, walk in the light, till the blood of Christ cleanseth you from all sin. O, pray for me, I hope I shall not forget to pray for you." He then requests Sarah to remember him kindly to Mr. and Mrs. Twigg, Effie Bartle, Mrs. Chambers, William and Hannah Ragg, Henry Alsop, Mrs. Ratcliff, and Mrs. Hall, and to Mr. and Mrs. Green of Rotherham, with several others unnoticed any where else; thus exemplifying, as in the present day, the fact of preachers gliding, through particular circumstances, and without any previous intention on their part, into a closer intimacy with some members and families than their predecessors, while others on the most familiar terms with the preachers who may have left the circuit, are only noticed in common with the other members of society. Hence, while some of the preachers indulge a preference, some of the people are only heard to dwell with rapture on the names and excellencies of only two or three out of the scores who may have travelled the circuit and ministered to them in holy things. This, though sometimes arising out of office, superior piety, eminent intellectual endowments, native disposition, family connexions, a casual introduction, and a thousand other things, perfectly as innocent as the friendship itself, may be carried to an extravagant length, and may prove prejudicial to usefulness. While some valuable names are omitted by Mr. Clough, there are others which we are happy to recognize, and which, but for him, might have remained unknown in Methodism. He informs his correspondent, that "Brother Pennington sends his Christian love to

Sarah Moore ;" a communication which implies a knowledge of the person—a knowledge acquired probably from his having laboured in this town and neighbourhood ; and hence another name appears on the page of history rescued from the oblivion into which others have sunk by whom the circuit has been benefited. William Pennington was born near Knaresborough, about 1734. He gave himself up to the work of an itinerant preacher in 1760, and in 1767 took a fever in the city of Dublin, during the progress of which he travelled to Athlone, where he languished about ten days, and died Nov. 22, leaving a wife and child to the care of a kind Providence. His remains were deposited in the church-yard at Athlone, and the following scripture engraved upon his tomb : " The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips : he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity." Mal. ii. 6. *

Mr. Bryant, now on the circuit, is one of those preachers of whom Mr. Atmore has not so much as preserved the name. Should this have been occasioned by a want of information, the following notices may serve to illustrate a part of his personal history. He is mentioned by William Green at this period, whose account-book, and other MSS., have proved of essential service to the writer, when minutes and all other printed documents have failed. When Mr. Bryant came into the circuit he was remarkably popular, but was perfectly opposed to every thing bordering upon noise. The select band, which was met at William Brammah's, and continued by his wife after he left the town, was distinguished for all those peculiarities attendant on a revival of religion. The house in which the meeting was held is yet standing in Fargate, one of those old buildings nearly opposite the top of Norfolk-row. Thither Mr. Bryant hastened to break up the meeting, and to put a stop to what he deemed irregularity. When he entered the house, he found the friends engaged in fervent prayer, —a hearty " amen" closing each period. The latter might prove a little too loud for him at first; but such

* Meth. Mem. p. 314.

was the Divine power that accompanied the prayer, that his heart began to melt and give way,—and his heart being affected, his ear soon became tuned to the response. He found that the case was scarcely so desperate as it had been represented; and instead of threatening and putting on the face of a lion, as he had done previous to his going to the place, he retired like a lamb. It was a time of refreshing to him from the presence of the Lord.

Among the persons who became serious, several professed to have received the forgiveness of sins. This, though no new doctrine either in Methodism or in Sheffield, occasioned a great deal of conversation from the number of its disciples, and was opposed by the Rev. George Bayliffe,* in a sermon delivered in the Parish Church of Sheffield. He did not only hold up the doctrine as erroneous, but very unguardedly stated, that those who were so eminently endowed would be enabled to work miracles, and therefore demanded miracle as a proof of the truth of their profession. Mr. Bryant, on the other hand, took up the subject in Mulberry-street Chapel, and refuted what was delivered to him as the statement of Mr. Bayliffe, establishing the doctrine on the testimony of Scripture, the Homilies, Liturgy, &c. of the Established Church, and shewing that miracles were not necessarily connected with the remission of sins. He further stated, that though the ordinary course of nature had not been reverted, he could nevertheless furnish Mr. Bayliffe with a few specimens which might be denominated *miracles of grace*,—not as effected by man, but by the Lord, through man's instrumentality; drunkards becoming sober, the lewd returning to chastity; with several other changes of character and disposition equally astonishing. It did not terminate here, for Jeremiah Cocker, who had ere this period begun to act in the capacity of a local preacher, published a small pamphlet in defence of the doctrine, and consequently against the opposite theory entertained by Mr. Bayliffe. Many have been the fruit-

* See Hunter's History of Hallamshire, p. 203, for a biographical notice of this divine.

less attempts of the writer to procure a copy of this pamphlet, but he could proceed no further than that of conversing with those who had seen it and read it soon after its publication, pronouncing it at the same time to have been written with ability.

1764. After the lapse of several months, Alice, the wife of William Brammah, sold part of her household utensils to enable her to proceed to Cornwall to see her husband. Mrs. Holy, afraid she would scarcely have sufficient for her journey, lent her some money, telling her, that, if she should not be able to repay it, to preserve her mind perfectly at rest, as it would never be required under any other circumstances than those of ability. This good, but eccentric woman, left Sheffield for Redruth, in Cornwall, on foot, and walked the whole of the way. When she was within a few stages of the destined place, she met an ill-looking man, who solicited alms. Supposing him possessed of a wicked design on either her life or her property, she gave him a half-crown, the whole of the money she had left after the regular expenses and other charities on the road. She proceeded on her route, seeing nothing more of the man, and before she had gone far, she found a half-crown lying on the road, which took her to the end of her journey. Here she marked a kind Providence. On her arrival at Redruth, she inquired for the Methodists, and was directed to their place of worship, where she found her husband engaged in a prayer-meeting with the friends. Being pretty loud in her responses, her husband, when he heard them, lifted up his eyes in astonishment, and was apprehensive that it was her apparition, not having had the slightest intimation of such a visit. They met after the meeting, but alas! there was not a home to which to take her, no provision having been made for a wife. This lack was soon supplied. Anxious to be useful, she went from house to house as she had been wont to do in Sheffield, gathering up backsliders, visiting the sick, and praying with the people in general. Such was the attachment the friends entertained towards her, that a house was provided, several persons uniting and supplying what they could spare of their own different articles of furniture. The

whole county of Cornwall was at this time one circuit; but on Mr. Rankin's arrival there, the preachers were obliged to divide it into two; three preachers supplying the west, and three the eastern part. Wm. Brammah had been favoured with the whole county to range in, but was now confined to the west with Messrs. Rankin and Stevens.* Mr. Rankin, speaking of the felicity he enjoyed, says, "In this happy frame of mind I continued till I reached Redruth. I had little or no acquaintance with those who were to be my fellow-labourers, except two of them; one of whom (Wm. Brammah) I could truly depend on, as a man, whose soul was wholly in the work of God. As soon as I had time to converse a little with our friends, I found that brother Brammah and his wife had not been idle, the few days they had been in Redruth before me. The first evening I preached, the Lord was pleased to give me an earnest of what he was about to do in this town, as well as in all the circuit. Ten or twelve were awakened under the sermon."† Nearly one thousand persons joined the different Societies in the course of the year. This revival of religion is noticed by others than the preachers engaged in it.‡ When Mrs. Brammah returned from Cornwall, she was a little more elevated than a traveller on foot, for she rode through Sheffield on an ass; a circumstance which a Methodist need not blush to notice, since Alice is now kept in countenance by ladies of fashion, who, notwithstanding the stubborn temper of some of these animals, are fond of ambling out upon them.

* Meth. Mag, 1811, p. 729. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. for 1804 p. 197.

CHAP. XIII.

Mr. Wesley preaches at Sheffield, Rotherham, and Doncaster—Grace Bennet—Jonathan Lindley, his great benevolence—Division of public instructors—A letter from Mr. Wesley—Mr. Bryant occasions some uneasiness in the Society at Sheffield—Letter from Mr. Eastwood—A notice of Mr. Lee—A division in the Sheffield Society—Mr. Wesley's disposition to conciliate both parties.

1764. Mr. WESLEY visited Sheffield and the neighbourhood in the month of March. "Thursday 29," says he, "between eleven and twelve, I preached at Alfreton, twelve miles from Derby, and in the evening, at Sheffield, to many more than could hear*, on 'Now is the day of this salvation.' In the morning, I gave a hearing to several of the Society, who were extremely angry at each other: it surprised me to find what trifles they had stumbled at; but I hope their snare is broken†. In the evening, while I was enlarging upon 'the righteousness of faith,' the word of God was quick and powerful: many felt it in their inmost souls; one backslider in particular, who was then restored to all she had lost, and the next morning believed she was saved from sin.

" Friday 30, I met those who believe God has redeemed them from all their sins: they are about sixty in number: I could not learn that any among them walk unworthy of their profession: many watch over them for evil; but they overcome evil with good: I found nothing of self-conceit, stubbornness, impatience of contradiction, or London enthusiasm among them ‡.

* Though preparatory steps had been taken for the enlargement of Mulberry-street Chapel, as noticed in the preceding chapter, and some alterations had taken place, yet the walls were untouched.

† Some uneasiness had ere this been excited relative to Mr. Bryant, of which this was probably either the thing itself, or an emanation.

‡ Referring to the religious reveries of George Bell and his followers.

They have better learned of Him that was meek and lowly of heart, to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

“ In the evening, I preached in the new house at Rotherham, on the sure foundation, ‘ Ye are saved through faith.’ It was a season of strong consolation to many. One who had been, for some time, groaning for full redemption, now found power to believe, that God had fulfilled her desire, and set her heart at liberty. Saturday 31, an odd circumstance occurred during preaching. It was well only serious people were present. An ass walked gravely in at the gate, came up to the door of the house, lifted up his head, and stood stock still, in a posture of deep attention. Might not *the dumb beast reprove* many who have far less decency, and not much more understanding?

“ At noon, I preached (the room being too small to contain the people) in a yard, near the bridge, in Doncaster. The wind was high, and exceedingly sharp, and blew all the time on the side of my head. In the afternoon, I was seized with a sore throat, almost as soon as I came to Epworth. However, I preached, though with some difficulty; but afterward I could hardly speak.”*

It was probably on this visit that Grace Bennet came over the moors from Derbyshire to hear Mr. WESLEY. She overtook a gentleman on horseback, as her niece, who resides in Sheffield, observed, whom she found to be a churchwarden. In the course of conversation, the Methodists were noticed; the subject produced an oath from the gentleman, when she took occasion to reprove him. He was much enraged, and threatened to horsewhip her. On pronouncing the threat, she told him that he must first obtain permission of her Father in heaven, pointing upward at the same time. He asked with a half-cooled sneer, whether the Lord had any thing to do with such as her, and whether she knew any thing of Him? She replied in the affirmative; shewed him the impropriety of his conduct as a professing pillar of the church; and informed him that he would acquire

* Journals, vol. iv. pp. 184, 185.

a more correct knowledge of God than he possessed, if he would attend Mulberry-street Chapel that evening, in which there would be Divine service. To her surprise, she saw the person there in the evening; and during the whole of the service he was much affected, wiping the tears from his face as they kept trickling from his eyes. On another occasion, but supposed to be anterior to this, when the mob arose and disturbed Mr. WESLEY while he was preaching out of doors, she had a custard thrown at her, which besmeared her face, head-dress, and riding habit. She scraped off the rough contents, and was thankful that she was accounted worthy to suffer for the gospel.

The good work of grace noticed by Mr. Rankin in the preceding chapter, continued to extend its influence over the hearts of many in the town and neighbourhood of Rotherham, as well as in Sheffield. Of the places in which preaching had been once established, Thribergh was perhaps the only exception where there was at this time a declension, occasioned probably by the death and removal of the Lowley family.* This, however, was in a great measure made up by the formation of a Society at Thribergh forge. There was a person of the name of Jonathan Lindley, born at Darfield, a village near Barnsley, in 1735, who, on his marriage, in 1759, removed to the iron works at Masbrough, near Rotherham, carried on by Messrs. Walkers and Company. This man was in the employ of the Messrs. Walkers, "one of whose family," says Mr. T. Taylor, "had been in the Methodist connexion, but embracing the principles of Calvinism, he and some others separated themselves from the connexion, and a preacher, of the name of Sharp, who separated at the same time, became their minister."† Instead of *one* of the Walker family, Mr. Taylor might have said *two* of them had been members of the Methodist Society. John Thorpe is no doubt the minister intended, whose name has been me-

* The property of Madam Finch, to whom Mr. Lowley was steward, devolved to John Fullerton, Esq. The old hall is pulled down in which this lady, the friend and patroness of Mr. Lowley, lived, and the present Thribergh-hall built in its stead, the residence of her heir.

† Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 684.

tamorphosed into Sharp by the printer. Under his ministry Jonathan Lindley sate for some time, but at length joined the Methodist Society. Jonathan was never intended for any thing great in the order of Providence, but he was what he professed to be, a sincere, humble Christian. He once thought himself called to preach, and made some attempts, but a judicious friend told him he believed he was mistaken, advising him at the same time to do all the good he could in a private way, in visiting the sick, in meetings for prayer, or in the class. He bowed with submission to the counsel of his friend, and gave up all thoughts of becoming a preacher. In the way in which his friend advised him to proceed, Jonathan was rendered extensively useful: and such is the peculiar genius of Methodism, that, as God intends every talent to be employed, so every talent can be brought into full exercise in its economy. It would perhaps be a work of less difficulty, than at first might appear, to assign to each preacher in the Methodist body, both local and travelling, his proper title, and so appoint him his proper work. A few judicious persons might effect this. On some of the plans, it is delightful to see some individuals distinguished from others, under the head of *exhorters*. It is an approach to the apostolic constitution, in which we find public instructors divided into Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Exhorters, and Rulers. From the hackneyed method of taking a text, and from the mistaken notion that there is something degrading in the character of an exhorter, persons very often leap into preachers at once. By making a proper distinction, a very moderate share of talent may go a long way in the church of God. This lesson has been learnt in part, and Methodism is not ashamed to own it. She can find employment for only one talent: and while she is as careful as circumstances will admit, not to put one talent in the place of five, five in the place of ten, she is far from discouraging the most humble attempts to do good. She tells her disciples, that if they can neither roll with the thunder of Demosthenes, nor flash with the lightning of Cicero, not to disdain to stammer out the love of God to man

in social life as private Christians. It was thus she spoke to Jonathan Lindley, and thus he acted.

Some particulars respecting this good man, it may be useful to notice in this history. "He removed from Masbrough to Thribergh forge," says Mr. Taylor, "some miles below Rotherham, and as there was neither preaching nor place of worship near, he got the local preachers to come and establish a prayer-meeting; ~~for~~ for being deeply and feelingly concerned for the salvation of his neighbours, he was willing to do every thing in his power to attain that blessed end.

"The liberal soul deviseth liberal things: he requested the travelling preachers to come to his house, which they did, once a fortnight, for years; Jonathan entertaining them without assistance from any one. Nor did he desire any help; it was a sufficient reward to Jonathan, that his neighbours had the gospel preached to them, and that some received the truth in the love thercof, and it was always a cause of grief to him if any thing happened to prevent the minister from attending. A small society was formed, and I and my colleagues regularly preached on the Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, and from thence went forward to Doncaster. It is true Jonathan could not accommodate us in an elegant way, either in bed or board, but he gave us the best he could afford; and I, for my own part, found myself satisfied and thankful under his homely roof.

"Our worthy brother had a generous soul, not only in aiding the cause of God, but in other respects also, which fell in his way. A poor child, who, his father being dead, had been turned adrift in the wide world, and was deplorably filthy and ragged, fell into the hands of Jonathan, who took him in, stripped him of his filthy rags, and got him cured of the itch, of which he was ill, and after some time put him apprentice to a hatter. Soon after, another poor forlorn orphan came in his way, who was wont to beg in the day-time, and at night to sleep among the ashes by the furnace-fire. This poor helpless creature, Jonathan took compassion on, stripped off his rags, which were only fit for the flames, got him into a tub of water, and washed and

cleaned him ; clothed him, both for week days, and also very decently for Sabbath days, sent him to school just as if he had been his own child ; and when of a proper age, put him apprentice to a carpenter. By the time he had well got rid of him, another, exactly of the same description, came about begging, and took up his lodging at the furnace-fire ; him also Jonathan took up, and he underwent the same process as the former. This boy was with him when I used to go to his house in 1782 ; and I am sure he could not have treated him with more tenderness if he had been Jonathan's own son. He clothed him decently, and had him taught to read, and if I mistake not, to write also ; and when he was old enough put him apprentice at Sheffield to a cutler.* Now, I may venture to say, those three lads could not cost this poor labouring man less than a hundred and fifty pounds. I might mention likewise, a poor girl, who found shelter under his roof for some considerable time, till she got into a place as a servant. Hear this, ye who grudge giving a penny or twopence weekly, and a shilling or two in a quarter, to help the cause of God, or in charity to the poor ; although in your days of sin and vanity you spent twice, nay, perhaps, ten times as much, in gratifying your sensual appetites.†" It was for an act of kindness that our Lord said, " Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her."‡ Jonathan Lindley removed from Thribergh to a place near Wakefield, where he continued to sustain the same Christian character, had the superintendence of a class, and finished his course with joy in 1810.

In returning to Sheffield, we find the Society in a state of considerable agitation. Mr. WESLEY, who was at Leeds, and who had probably been written to on the subject, addressed Sarah Moore thus by letter :—

" My dear Sister, *Leeds, July 5, 1764.*
" I am fully convinced, that T. Bryant's staying

* The person to whom he was bound was the late Mr. Henry Longden. † Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 685, 686. ‡ Matth. xxvi. 13.

another year in Sheffield circuit, would neither be good for him, nor for the people. I know his strength, and I know his weakness. But he shall go no further than the Leeds circuit, from whence he may now and then drop over to Sheffield, and the Sheffield preacher to Leeds.

“Sally, see that you walk circumspectfully. The eyes of many are upon you: and above all, the eye of God! I am,

“Your affectionate brother,

“J. WESLEY.”

Sarah Moore, partly probably through the influence of her mother, who warmly espoused the cause of Mr. Bryant, appears to have indulged too much the spirit of a meddler on the present occasion. One of the causes of contention was the clerical appearance and character assumed by Mr. Bryant, who, in consequence of having been ordained by a Greek Bishop who visited England in 1760, considered himself entitled to wear a gown in the pulpit. This was one of the “trifles,” noticed by Mr. WESLEY, at which some of the members “stumbled,” and for which they “were extremely angry at each other.” Having proved an occasion of offence to some, Mr. Bryant was advised to throw it aside, to which he and his friends objected. Here was the core of dissension; and it is remarkable, in tracing Ecclesiastical History, that some of the most serious divisions in the Christian Church have originated in either non-essential doctrines or insignificant appendages added to the office or the person of the minister: men busying themselves about “mint, and anise, and cummin,” while omitting “the weightier matters of the law”—attending to the habiliments of the body, while neglecting the momentous concerns of the soul.

Mr. WESLEY’s object in this intricate affair was threefold,—to preserve Mr. Bryant to the body, by granting him another station,—to remove him from the scene of contention, in order to prevent matters from becoming worse,—and yet to make it agreeable to both Mr. Bryant and his friends, allowing the distance to be such as to admit of an occasional interview. This pro-

posal was not acceded to, and an apparent suspension seems to have taken place by one of the Leeds preachers coming over to supply his lack of service. This preacher was Mr. J. Eastwood, a man who appears to have been in the neighbourhood before, but who, like several other early labourers, is unknown in Methodist history, and is just snatched from utter oblivion by the following letter, addressed to the same person as the above, and directed to be left at Mr. WESLEY's lodgings, Sheffield.

“Scholes, July 23, 1764.*

“ Dear Sister,

“ I purpose, God willing, to be at Denby-dike, on Monday the 6th of August, at seven o'clock in the evening; at Bradwell on Tuesday night; at Sheffield on Wednesday and Thursday nights; at Rotherham on Friday night; and at Staincross on my return at one o'clock on Saturday. Pray send word to the Paper-house* of my intention, and they will forward it to Denby-dike; seeing that I cannot, on account of it being such a bye-place, get intelligence thither. I shall expect Benjamin, or some good friend, either at Denby-dike† on Monday night, or at the Paper-house on Tuesday morning, to pilot me over the inhospitable and almost impassable moors and mountains. I should not be sorry to see some of my Sheffield friends at Bradwell.

“ Since I saw you, some of the finest springs of nature have been tried. God has been graciously pleased to take my dear little girl to himself. But the dead is alive, the lost is found. I rest assured, that though she shall not return to me, I shall go to her.

“ I am glad to hear that the wilderness becomes in such a wonderful manner a fruitful field. May the Lord still add to your number and to your graces! It gives me pleasure to hear that the people are recovering their senses, though I am concerned (oh, grief of heart to think!) that my brethren of the cloth have been ready thereat to run—*mad*. The wisdom of God, I yet find,

* Near Thorpe. † Near Thurlstone. ‡ About 10 miles west of Barnsley.

is foolishness with men; nevertheless, through the foolishness of preaching, He still saves those that believe; so that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men. ‘I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.’

“Pray be so good, let me again request you, as to send word to all the afore-mentioned places, if possible; and to what other places you judge proper, with the time of preaching at each. But you should remember that, to forget Betty Booth, will be the ready way to make her think of you. My wife joins in love to you and all the dear friends.

“Your affectionate friend and servant,
“J. EASTWOOD.”

This female, who seems to have had a pretty extensive correspondence, received another letter from Mr. Thomas Lee, dated Oct. 1, 1764, who was then at Edinburgh. He notices the prosperity of the work of God, particularly in Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen, complains of Scotch prejudices, and mentions his own ill state of health; observing, in reference to the latter, that it was the opinion of many he would not be long an inhabitant of earth, but stating as a kind of set-off against it, that as “sometimes a bad house stands long, so a weak body deceives many.” He then encourages her to look to Christ, telling her that there is in Him, “A fulness of the Godhead,—a fulness of justifying grace,—a fulness of grace to implant in the heart,—a fulness of grace to be derived from Him in every time of need,—a fulness of grace to be obtained to purify the heart, and to fill it with the fulness of God,—and a fulness of glory in Him for those who have washed their robes in his blood.” This appears to be the outline of one of his sermons; and while it shews the experimental character of his pulpit exercises, it reflects no small honour on his attempt at usefulness in his epistolary communications.

The party feuds that had been raised through Mr. Bryant, now terminated in a division of the Society. Those of the principal members that espoused his cause were Ezra Twigg, John Butler, Miss Turner, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Hall, Mr. Lacey, and Sarah Moore's mother, with several others. Among those who remained with the old body were Mr. John Wilson, Richard Addy, John Rider, Henry Alsop, James Walker, Mrs. Holy, with an equally respectable number of others. Some attempts were made to secure to Mr. Bryant the use of Mulberry-street Chapel, by those of the trustees who were his adherents; but this was found impracticable, and they contemplated the erection of another building, which they accordingly commenced, and which is thus noticed by Hunter: "The chapel in Scotland-street was built, 1764, by Mr. Bryant, one of the persons who received ordination from a bishop of the Greek Church, who was in London in 1760. He preached above thirty years in the chapel. Since his death the place has been occupied by the Methodists of what is called the New Connexion."* While the building was going on, Mr. Bryant preached in a room engaged for the purpose; and when the weather would admit of it, he preached abroad in different parts of the public streets, and was rendered useful to many. He lodged at the house of old Mrs. Moore, which rendered the situation of her daughter Sarah rather uncomfortable; and from some remarks which she had penned, apparently as hints for further amplification, it should seem that she was occasionally either wavering in her mind which cause to espouse, or designedly trimming between both. Having written to Mr. WESLEY, she received the following letter:—

"London, December 8, 1764.

"My dear Sister,

"Your business is, by every possible means, to calm the intemperate spirits on both sides. There has been much ill blood; and many unkind sayings, which had been better let alone. Now, at least, let there be, by

* Hist. of Hallamshire, p. 171.

general agreement, an entire cessation of arms. Our God is a God of Peace; and all his children should, with all their might, labour after it. I have heard something of the kind you mention: but not in the same manner you relate it. However, let it die, and be forgotten. I am,

“ Your affectionate brother,
“ J. WESLEY.”

CHAP. XIV.

Mr. Bryant leaves Sheffield, writes to Sarah Moore—Double-dealing—Scotland-street Chapel—Mr. Wesley visits the town and neighbourhood—Mr. Bryant's return to Sheffield; an account of him—Mr. Mayer's labours, persecutions, and usefulness at Eyam, Castleton, Sheffield, &c.

1765. Mr. BRYANT, who had resided in Sheffield chiefly since the Conference of 1764, left for London, and was obliged to stop at Shepton Mallet some time, owing to an accident which befel his mare. From thence he wrote to Sarah Moore:—

“ *Shepton Mallet, March 8, 1765.*

“ Dear Sally,

“ I delayed writing, thinking I should be in London before this time; but I have been disappointed: first, by being ill myself; and secondly, as I was going to mount my mare last week for London, I found her so lame, that it was impracticable to proceed with her ten miles. She is now better, and I hope Providence will permit me to set out for London, in a few days: then I will fulfil my promise; write to Mr. Twigg, &c.; but I cannot determine till I get to London. Tell Mr. Twigg the reasons why I am not at London as proposed. Last week I received a letter desiring me to visit London immediately. Mr. WESLEY has not written to me, nor I to him, since I received my discharge. I received a letter from Sheffield, in which I read these words, ‘ Sally Moore says, you must come to Sheffield.’ When I write to you from London, I desire you will let me know *all* particulars, and whether you will be of the same mind after Mr. WESLEY has been at Sheffield; for I find he sets out this day from Bristol for Sheffield,

and I suppose he will be with you as soon as this comes to hand.

“ What shocking work Rankin makes at Plymouth Dock ! The people were vastly taken with W. Darney, and the Lord owned and blessed his word much. But Mr. Rankin, Mr. Oldham, and Mr. Stevens (a Cornish preacher) preached perfection, &c. to such a degree, that the people will not suffer either of them to enter the preaching-house more. Mr. Roberts is gone to Dock, to settle, if possible, the affair, and to prepare the way for Wm. Darney to come into our round. Richard Houghton, one that received ordination with me in London, nearly two years since, left London for debt, fled to Plymouth, and Mr. WESLEY, not knowing the case, suffered him to preach at the Dock: he was well received by the people, with Wm. Darney, but has since been taken up, and is now in Exeter gaol. O what work there is at the Dock ! and by what I find, W. Brammah is not much better in the lower part of Cornwall than they are there. The Dock people say they will receive any moderate man, but Rankin, &c. they cannot.* What a mercy I was kept out of that fire ! Surely this is matter of praise. As to Mr. WESLEY, I love him and respect him as a man of God, and my father in the gospel.

“ Dear Sally, be patient for a time. Though I am

* This “shocking work” is fortunately noticed by Mr. Rankin. After mentioning his colleagues, among whom was Wm. Darney, he says, “ Brother Darney had preached for years; he had been eccentric in his manner of labouring in the connection, and Mr. WESLEY, with my brethren, thought I might be able to cure him. For a season he behaved pretty well, and was ready to be advised; but he relapsed into his former conduct, and advanced opinions in public, contrary to the Methodist doctrine and discipline; so that we were obliged to call in a young man to labour in his place, and dismiss him from the circuit, and that by Mr. WESLEY’s express approbation. The greatest hurt he did was in the Society at Plymouth Dock, where he nearly divided the people. My other fellow-labourers were steady, and alive to God, and much blest in their labours. The work of God more or less prospered in every Society in the country. In two or three months hundreds were added to the Societies in the west, and many savingly brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; many backsliders were restored, and a most wonderful change took place in every parish where the gospel was preached. Most of the country villages were like Eden, as the garden of the Lord. It was not uncommon for ten or twenty to find peace with God in one day, or at one sermon, or love-feast, in many places.”—Meth. Mag. 1811, p. 729.

not called a Methodist, yet I am one still, and hope to live and die the same in heart. When my mare is quite well, I shall go, if God permit, immediately to London, and then shall write again to Sheffield for every particular. I believe you will be faithful ; and be sure to be close, for that is wisdom in all cases. Tell brother Butler and Mr. Twigg, that the lameness on my mare is only an injury in the heel, of which she will be certain to be better in a week. Request Mr. Twigg to send word by Mr. Hornsfield, or a letter to me, saying what I must do with the mare when I reach London, for I should not wish to dispose of her if I can help it. Possibly I may see you all at Sheffield again ; yet the Lord only knows, for I cannot determine. It is likely when I reach London, I shall put on the flag. In the mean time, I rest your loving and affectionate brother, in the bonds of the gospel,

“ T. BRYANT.

“ P.S. My kind love to your mother, to Lacey, Jonathan, Miss Turner, Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe, Mrs. Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Twigg, and all true friends. Do you think it right for them to give up their trust?* But let me be a cipher.

“ Surely the right-hand of the Lord will bring mighty things to pass. As soon as I hear the words, ‘Loose him, and let him go,’ and struggle to get free, the thorns entangle me again ; though nothing keeps me but the mare at present. Pray for me ; when I bow my knee before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I offer up my weak petitions for my friends at Sheffield. Adieu for the present.

“ My box has been at London nearly a fortnight. I shall see Mr. Hornsfield as soon as possible. I charge you to keep this letter safe to yourself ; unless you add Lacey, and Mr. Twigg, &c. Be sure to give my kind love to Tommy Martin and his sister.”

Though this female appears to have wanted decision of character in some instances, for which many allow-

* An allusion apparently to the Trustees of Mulberry-street Chapel, who separated with him.

ances might be made, yet it is impossible not to perceive a shade of duplicity in the fact of her bearing tidings to both parties,—a conduct which genuine Christian simplicity would never tolerate; nor is it less apparent, that Mr. Bryant himself was partly a concealed character, as he only purposed to “put on the flag,” and shew himself openly, under certain circumstances. While, however, the latter wished to convert the former into a tool to answer his own purposes of information, by receiving from her “every particular,”—a case on which he would scarcely have dared to presume at present, if he had not had previous encouragement,—it is certain, from his asking her whether she would “be of the same mind after Mr. WESLEY had been at Sheffield,” and from his enjoining secrecy upon her, that he considered himself as having but a doubtful hold of her sincerity and her services. From Mr. WESLEY’s letter, of July 5, it may be fairly inferred, that this female had manifested great solicitude for Mr. Bryant’s continuance in the Sheffield circuit, and in the letter above, the writer had it in his power to state, “Sally Moore says you must come to Sheffield;” so far here is consistency in an adherence to the same person: but in the interim she is holding a communication with Mr. WESLEY, to which he replies, “I have heard something of the kind you mention; but not in the same manner you relate it. However, let it die, and be forgotten.” If a conjecture might be indulged, the circumstance related was something in which Mr. WESLEY was interested, but which, in her relation, had received a higher tone of colouring than when communicated before: and as though Mr. WESLEY himself could scarcely repose confidence in her, and was doubtful whether she was not wanting his opinion on the subject for others as well as herself, he does not in the last letter give her an opinion to retail; but advises her to promote peace, and to bury the past in oblivion; very slender provision for one who had to communicate “*all* particulars.”

From Mr. Bryant’s letter, it may be fairly inferred also, that the date assigned for the erection of Scotland-street Chapel by Mr. Hunter, in his History of Hallamshire, is rather too early. He fixes it in the year prior

to the date of this letter. Mr. Bryant left the Methodist Connexion only in the summer of 1764; he took but a part of the Society away with him—a Society which was so poor as a *whole*, as to be unable to build a new chapel, having been indebted to Mrs. Holy for the loan of money to enable them to enlarge the old one; we can, therefore, scarcely suppose that, when divided, they would attempt an undertaking equal to that of Scotland-street Chapel, till they had acquired considerable additional strength, for the increase of which, and for the completion of the building, there was not sufficient time in a period of about eight months. There are, in addition to this, presumptive proofs of the chapel not having even been commenced at this period, much more of its being finished; for Mr. Bryant left Sheffield with a doubt whether he should return. “Sally Moore says, you must come to Sheffield.” He, however, is so far from satisfying her on this subject, that he replies, “Possibly I may see you all at Sheffield again; yet the Lord only knows, for I cannot determine.” He had packed up previous to his departure, and his “box” reached London a fortnight before himself; and he himself, as will appear from a subsequent letter, was absent nearly three months, promising on his return only to spend a short time in Sheffield. Supposing the chapel to have been built at his own expense, previous to this, it was foreign to his own interest to have deserted his rising cause for such a length of time, and at a period so critical; and, on the admission of it having been erected by his friends, it was opposed to their interest to have suffered him to leave so soon, without any certainty of his return: nor is it likely that either he himself would have felt free to return, or that his friends would have given him their firm support, after having left them to make their best of such an erection. The truth appears to be, that his success in Sheffield was not equal to his expectations; he went to London to improve his circumstances, at which place he purposed to hoist “the flag,” if he succeeded; but being disappointed there again, he returned and took up his residence in Sheffield.

That which Mr. Bryant had heard of Mr. WESLEY'S purposed visit to Sheffield was soon realized. "Wednesday, March 20, M. Lewen took me in a post-chaise to Derby," says he, "where the New House was thoroughly filled: and the people behaved in a quite different manner from what they did when I was here last. Thursday 21, we went on, though with much difficulty, being often ready to stick fast, to Sheffield. The house here is full twice as large as it was. And so is the congregation. The little differences which had been for some time among the people, were now easily adjusted. And I left them all, united in love, and resolved to strengthen each other's hands. Saturday 23, we took horse in a furious wind, which was ready to bear us away. About ten I preached in Bradwell, in the High Peak, where, notwithstanding the storm, abundance of people were got together. I had now an opportunity of inquiring concerning Mr. B—y. He did run well; till one offence after another swallowed him up: but he scarcely enjoyed himself after. First, his oldest daughter was snatched away: then his only son: then himself. And only two or three of that large family now remain."*

When Mr. WESLEY speaks of the chapel being "full twice as large as it was," he refers to the addition of the gallery which would enable it to accommodate double the number of people, though not quite twice the width and length. It is this preaching-house which Mr. Myles confounds with Norfolk-street Chapel, stating Norfolk-street Chapel to have been first built in 1755, and re-built in 1765 †, the periods more properly assigned for the first occupation and enlargement of Mulberry-street house. A remark may also be made on the state of the Society, in connection with what has preceded. Mr. WESLEY observes, "The little differences which had been for some time among the people, were now easily adjusted. And I left them all united in love, &c." But why "easily adjusted now?" Mr. Bryant, the moving cause, was removed. And who were the "people" among whom "the little differences" subsist-

* Journals, vol. iv. p. 231.

† Chron. Hist, p. 440.

ed? Not that part of the Society left in possession of Mulberry-street Chapel, to whom he had just preached. These were agreed already—"united in love" before he came—"and resolved to strengthen each other's hands." By the "people," we are unquestionably to understand the parties collectively, between whom alone there were "differences." But now those differences are "adjusted"—they are "united in love"—nay more, they are to labour and dwell together, "resolved to strengthen each other's hands;" another evidence, by the way, that Scotland-street Chapel was not built in 1764, for they would never have abandoned it so soon. Here it may be observed, once for all, that it is not a censorious disposition, a sense of self-sufficiency, or any suspicion of imposition, that occasions the writer of these pages to differ with any who may have preceded him; those writers had no favorite theory to establish any more than himself; they were in quest of fact as well as he; and if he should have been favoured in any instance with documents to which they had no access, the persons who furnished the additional information are those who demand our gratitude. To return to the Society again; the tranquillity of which Mr. WESLEY left the Society in possession, was soon disturbed. Mr. Bryant addressed Sarah Moore by letter, signifying his intention to visit Sheffield.

"London, May 18, 1765,

"Dear Sally, Saturday night, nine o'clock.

"I have sold my mare, and have this hour taken a place in the Sheffield machine.* Note, I shall travel on the outside for cheapness and pleasure, and shall leave London at twelve o'clock on Monday night. On Wednesday, we shall pass through Nottingham, I suppose, and shall breakfast at Mansfield; on which day I hope to dine at Sheffield, where you will hear particulars at the inn. I shall be quite glad to be met by my friends,

* These machines are frequently noticed in Mr. WESLEY's Journals, vol. iii. p. 179, 180, 262, &c. There is something ponderous in the term, and which prevents us from associating with it the comfort and rapidity of a modernly-constructed stage-coach.

as many as you please. To-morrow I read prayers, preach twice, and give the sacrament once. My kind love to all in Jesus. I am your's in Christ,

“ T. S. BRYANT.

“ P.S. I beg you will not blast it among the Methodists, but let me come secretly and in peace, for I shall stay only a month or six weeks. Adieu.”

No sooner did Mr. Bryant make his appearance, than former professions of friendship and attachment were renewed, and nearly one half of the Society united themselves to him. Absence seemed to heighten the value they set upon him—subscriptions were entered into to erect the chapel in Scotland-street—a room was engaged in the interim—and street-preaching was resorted to. When he entered upon the building in Scotland-street, which was afterwards given to him, he established classes, love-feasts, and administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper. He took up his residence, as formerly, with old Mrs. Moore.

It is but just to state, that Mr. Bryant was rendered very useful during the former part of his ministry in Sheffield ; but he lost by degrees the spirit of his work, and long before his death, it might be said, “ The glory is departed.” He drank too deeply into the spirit of the division, and not satisfied with such as voluntarily united themselves to him from other bodies, or by gathering sinners out of the world, he employed several artifices to induce the members of the Mulberry-street Society to forsake the fold in which they had been brought up. To Richard Addy he once said, “ Richard, you were brought to God under my ministry ; I claim you as the fruit of it. Do you never think, now that I am separated from the Methodists, that it is your duty to unite with me ?” Richard replied, “ Sir, I acknowledge you as my spiritual father ; but when I was convinced under you, you were then a Methodist ; I was brought into a connexion with the body through you, and I intend to abide wherein I am called. If you have changed your coat, it is no reason I should change mine.” It might have been endured, if he had proceed-

ed no further. But he too often took his own spirit into the pulpit, and dealt in invective and personalities. James Hawksworth and some more of the Mulberry-street members went to hear him, after he had resided in Sheffield a few years. Perceiving them in the chapel, he embraced an opportunity of wandering from his subject into the doctrine of Christian Perfection, and with a sarcastic sneer, exclaimed, "Perfect, perfect devils!" On meeting James Hawksworth a day or two after, he was as solicitous as modesty would permit to know his opinion of the sermon. "Well," replied James, "you will procure a little bread and some clothes in this world, and will perhaps lose your soul at last." This was unexpected, and Mr. Bryant, somewhat affected, said, "I am sometimes afraid of that myself," and withdrew. These two anecdotes were related to the Rev. Joseph Taylor, who travelled on the Sheffield circuit, by the persons themselves, from whom the writer had them. Poor Bryant was miserable in spirit long before his death, and seemed to be kept alive by suffering; like the tree which continues to stand long after age has eaten away its core, the sap still circulating through its withered rind, by which it is enabled to live on, in the midst of youth and verdure, a melancholy spectacle of mockery and decay. And fatal indeed is the blast of misery, when it has forced its way into the soul of a man once exalted in office and high in grace. It may be compared to the storm, which has burst in the port-holes of a thick-ribbed vessel, when, in a moment, all its gloomy apartments are roaring like a hundred cataracts. But there is an air which memory is not permitted to breathe. Happy, happy indeed, if his misery led to genuine contrition of heart! and equally so, if his example prove a warning to others.

During the agitated state of the Society, several eminently useful persons in other parts of the connexion visited Sheffield, and supported the hands of those who worshipped in Mulberry-street. It was about this time, that the late Mr. Matthew Mayer, of Portwood-hall, near Stockport, came into this town and neighbourhood,

of whose labours, persecutions, and success, the following extracts from his memoir will furnish an idea:—

“ In 1765, after preaching at Banmoor at noon, and at Bradwell at night, some friends who had heard him at both places, invited him to go to preach at Eyam. No Methodist preacher had yet ventured to go to this place *; the common people were chiefly employed in the lead mines, and were a most savage race.† Our

* It had been visited in 1761; and preaching had probably been withdrawn.

† It is astonishing how soon (and what can be a stronger proof of the radical depravity of human nature?) a people will sink into a state of mental and moral degradation, after an enlightened ministry is withdrawn. Not a century had rolled over the village since the warning voice of the pious and faithful Mompesson had been heard in it, the fruit of whose ministry must have continued some time after he had ceased to be an inhabitant of this world; and not a century had elapsed since the destroying Angel stood over it in all the terrible array of the *Plague*: but the recollection of the one, and the voices from “ *The Field of Graves*” of the other, were insufficient to prevent the villagers from relapsing into a state of rudeness, or to tame their savage ferocity. Though few local visitations were more frequently the theme of conversation than the *Plague*, yet they were heedless of their own dissolution. They each could say,

“ Beneath my feet, how great a sum
Of human misery lies dumb!
The carnival of death,
Within our village, once was held,
Long, fierce, unvanquish'd, and unquell'd:—
With poisonous breath
His minister of vengeance came;
Not whirlwind, famine, sword, or flame,
But that most dreadful, deathful, vague,
Untamed, soul-sickening monster, *Plague*!
He came with recent carnage drunk,
With gloating eyes, and visage sunk,
From where he, on his mission last,
The Lord's destroying angel, pass'd,
And in the havoc of his strife
Made such a waste and wreck of life,
As might have grieved the' unpitying moon,
Or sicken'd e'cn the sun at noon:
He came, while yet the urns of Thames
Had scarcely quench'd Augusta's flames;
Where ruin with a ghastly smile
Lean'd o'er each half-extinguish'd pile,—
A smouldering tombstone on the breast
Of the last victim of the pest.
O'er hills and vales of gold and green,
He pass'd, undreaded and unseen:
Foregoing cities, towns, and crowds;
Gay mansions glittering to the clouds,
Magnificence and wealth,
To reach a humbler, sweeter spot,
The village and the peaceful cot,
The residence of health.

* * * *

preacher, however, did not hesitate, but fixed an early day ; preached as usual at Banmoor at noon, and taking with him all the force he could muster, proceeded to Eyam. They found a multitude of people come together from different motives. The preacher took his stand in West-street, by the side of a barn. There was one man, a ring-leader of the mob, who had sworn to his companions that he would pull the preacher down. His appearance soon caught the preacher's eye, who fixing his steadfastly upon him, addressed the people, telling them his design in coming, and entreating a patient hearing. This man was so struck, that he stood immovable during the whole sermon, and he confessed

But youth, and infancy, and age
 In vain the ruthless foe engage ;
 And health and strength in vain
 Awhile withstood to feel at last,
 When earthly hope and help were past,
 Extremes of fiercer pain.
 And now their register of woe
 Lies written in the dust below ;
 The charnel's secrets none may read,
 Or o'er the volume of distress,
 That mass of perish'd wretchedness,
 The very heart might bleed ;
 And could a mutter'd spell restore
 These buried forms to life once more,
 And bid them stand, array'd afresh
 In the same muscles, skin, and flesh,
 With which their living bodies stood,
 An hour, before the curdling blood
 Grew stagnant at the heart ;
 Such sight the stoutest would appal ;
 At this the loftiest crest would fall,
 The firmest nerves would start !
 Had I the wealth of either Ind,
 And could that precious bribe rescind
 The mandate of my fate,
 And add an hour, I would not stand
 An hour amid that ghastly band ;
 I could not bear such sight to see :—
 Yet ah ! 'tis unreveal'd to me
 In heaven's eternal care,
 Both when and how my death may be,
 And what this breast can bear."

The above extract is made from a poem, entitled "The Village of Eyam, in four parts ; containing, 1. The Village in the Peak ; 2. The Reign of the Plague ; 3. Cucklet Church ; 4. The Field of Graves. By John Holland." It was first published in the Sheffield Iris, for 1821, and afterwards in a separate form at Macclesfield. When it is known, that the writer of this History first suggested the subject to Mr. Holland, and that at his request the poem was undertaken, he will be pardoned for expressing a degree of interest in its success, and in being thus particular.

afterwards that he had not power to stir hand or foot. The preacher gave out, at the close of the meeting, that he would come again that day fortnight. The few that had some concern for their souls met frequently during this interval, to pray together, and to strengthen each other's hands in their new pursuits. The mob, in the mean time, endeavoured to harden each other, and to increase their forces; so that when the preacher came again with his friends at the time appointed, the mob was far more numerous than before, and seemed determined on mischief. The preacher, on this occasion, chose the inside of the barn, which was presently filled with those who wished to hear; so that the mob was not able to enter, and could only disturb by their noise on the outside. Their attempts, however, were vain: for the power of the Lord was present to 'wound and to heal, to kill and make alive.'

"After preaching, such persons as were desirous of meeting together, to seek the Lord for the salvation of their souls, were desired to retire into an adjoining house; when twenty-three persons, most of whom had been awakened under these two sermons, were formed into a small society: and of these, eighteen professed to have found peace with God; so wonderfully had God wrought upon the hearts of this people in these two weeks. The following Sunday, Mr. John Allen attempted to preach there, but it being the time of the wakes, the mob, which was very outrageous, broke the windows of the house; and the preacher narrowly escaped being lamed by the stones that were thrown in. Mr. Allen and his friends applied to a magistrate, but could get no redress. Our preacher returned again at the appointed fortnight's end, accompanied by his former friends. The house was filled with those who came to hear: the mob surrounded the house, made several attempts to get inside, but could not; nor were they able to interrupt the preacher by their noise without. Encouraged, however, by their last Sabbath's attack, when preaching was over, they seemed like lions or tigers let loose. As the congregation dispersed, they were pelted with dirt and mud along the streets. A sufficient guard was left behind to watch for the preacher, whose lodg-

ings were in another part of the town. After waiting a considerable time, expecting them to disperse, the preacher, and two young men *, who staid to accompany him, ventured among them, and boldly told them, what would be the consequences to themselves if they dared to assault them. No sooner had the preacher and his friends turned their backs, than the mob followed, pelt-ing them with mud, filth, stones, and brick-bats ; but happily they escaped unhurt. Next morning it was resolved, if possible, to punish some of the ring-leaders : but the difficulty was to find a magistrate who would do his duty. At length they concluded to go to a magistrate at Stoke, who was an old clergyman, and rarely acted in his magisterial capacity. When requested to grant summonses for several of the principal disturbers, he hesitated, and desired a private interview with Mr. Mayer. They retired together, and entered into a long conversation, which afforded the preacher a favourable opportunity of explaining his sentiments, the doctrines he preached, and his reasons for coming among these people. The result of the conversation seems to have been satisfactory to him ; for the magistrate concluded it by saying, 'Mr. Mayer, I have no doubt you are called to preach, but I advise you to get ordained, and go into the church.' The preacher thanked him for his advice, but replied, 'My call is to preach the gospel, without money or price, to the poor.' He then granted the summonses : the offenders were brought before him, and finding it impossible to evade the punishment of the law, they expressed great contrition, and promised they would no more either disturb the preacher or congregation : having been bound in recognizances for their good behaviour in future, they were discharged. Thus ended the opposition of the mob ; but Satan threatened with another scheme, which succeeded far better. The landlord of the house where preaching had been, discharged his tenant on that account : and the clergyman of the parish went round among the people, and prevail-

* These two young men were the late Mr. Philip Sheldon, of Eyam, father of Mrs. Thomas Fenton, now of Eyam, and the late Mr. John Sheldon, a class-leader at Thorncliffe, who died happy in God, in 1821.

ed upon as many as he could, to sign an agreement, not to hear the Methodists any more.* Preaching was, therefore, suspended here for many years; and the deceased went from hence to Grindleford-bridge, about two miles distant; where he was received by his very respectable friend Mr. Moore, under whose protection preaching was continued, and the friends of Eyam and Stoney Middleton regularly attended at this place, till they regained the privilege in their own towns.

“ After preaching at Bradwell one Sunday evening, several persons from Castleton solicited him to preach there on the following morning. He agreed: and went at the time appointed, with his old and much respected friend Mr. Benjamin Barber. These persons had provided a large house; and great numbers were assembled to hear the word. In a little while there came up a number of men shouting, and beating a drum, &c. &c. They thought to disturb the people with their noise, but could not get into the house, which was completely filled with hearers. Finding they could not stop the preacher, they contrived to close the doors, and blew in assafoetida through the key-hole: this incommoded the people more than it did the preacher, who still went on with his discourse. After preaching, the people were permitted to disperse quietly, and the preacher and his friends to retire to the house of Mrs. Slack, to take some refreshment. Here the mob re-assembled, and forced their way into the house, making great noises, beating a drum, &c. Mrs. Slack was advised to go to them, and request them to withdraw, and to tell them if they did not, she would burst their drum. They disregarded her; and she boldly struck a large knife into the drum head, which put an end to their music, and caused them to withdraw out of the house. They were still bent on mischief, and contrived to get upon the house, and to throw a cow’s entrails down the chimney of the parlour, where the party were sitting. After waiting a considerable time, the preacher and his friends ventured out

* The date of this event should be placed a little later, for the clergyman referred to, was poor Cunningham the poet, author of “ Naval Triumph;” “ Chatsworth;” and “ The Russian Prophecy.”

among them, and walked through the midst of them; but no sooner were they got fairly out on the road, than the mob commenced a furious attack, pelting them with dirt, dung, stones, or any thing they could pick up, so that they were soon covered over with filth; and finding their lives in imminent danger, they turned round upon them, and the preacher having faced them, pointed out what would be the certain consequence of thus assaulting them on the high road. They cried out, 'We have done the preacher pretty well, let us now at Benjamin.' Instantly he was covered with a shower of stones, one of which gave him a severe wound in his back, and caused the blood to flow copiously. Seeing this, some began to be alarmed, lest he might be mortally wounded, and they might be found guilty of murder; they therefore desisted, and suffered the preacher and his friend to escape without further injury. The following awful occurrence struck terror into this mob, being interpreted a judgment from heaven. The ring-leaders on this occasion were three of the servants of — B —, Esq. and the person who beat the drum was his groom. This man broke in his master's young horses, and two days afterwards, having to train one of them to the use of fire-arms, he put a loaded pistol into his pocket, which by some unknown accident went off in the stable, and killed him on the spot."

The writer proceeds: Mr. Mayer "being on a visit for a few days at Congleton, a person who was there from Sheffield, strongly pressed him to come over and see them. Being unacquainted with any one there, he declined at first, but afterwards consented to go over, and fixed a time. He preached at Banmoor on the Sunday, and arrived at Sheffield to preach on the Monday evening. Preaching having been given out for a stranger, the congregation was large. He was received under the hospitable roof of Mrs. Holy, for several days: an intimate friendship from this time commenced with this respectable family, to the younger branches of which our preacher was made very useful; and he visited them regularly twice in the year, for many years afterwards."*

* Meth. Mem. 1816, pp. 162-166.

CHAP. XV.

Doncaster—High Green given up—The powerful effects of the gospel—Chapel Town visited—Profanation of the Sabbath—Minutes of Conference corrected—Peter Jaco and Paul Greenwood—Disturbances at Mulcerry-street preaching-house—Mr. Wesley preaches—Death of a religious mocker—Mr. Whitfield visits Sheffield—Thomas Holy, Esq.—An Address to the Methodists—Robert Roberts and Joseph Guilford—Mr. Wesley preaches at Rotherham—Sudden death of a good woman.

1765. PREACHING having been established in Doncaster a short time, it was natural for the more active members of Society to endeavour to extend the benefits of the gospel to their ignorant fellow-creatures in the neighbouring villages and hamlets. This, however, was not effected without some opposition; and, as in other instances, the rostrum was converted into a battery, from whence several pieces of abuse were fired off against the Methodists. “Being at Cantley, near Doncaster,” says Wm. Green, “in June last, Rob. Briggs informed me that the priest had been fighting the Methodists in the pulpit, calling them false prophets, and saying, that they crept into houses, leading captive silly women laden with their sins, &c., which pleased many of his hearers, taking it for granted that he had done for the Methodists. Upon this, I wrote the following lines, desiring him to fix them on the church doors, ‘ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps’ clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.’ Matt. vii. 15. Do you inquire how we are to know them? Answer; Our Saviour saith, ‘ By their fruits,’ ver. 16. And what can these ‘ fruits’ be, but, first, their bad doctrine, and, secondly, their bad lives? They are not false prophets, but true ones, that convert sinners. In reference to the former, the Lord saith, ‘ I have not sent these prophets,

yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied' (or preached.) And in ver. 32, he declares, 'Therefore they shall not profit this people at all.' It is to these—persons who are false in their doctrines and immoral in their lives, that St. Paul refers, in the 3d chap. of his 2d Epistle to Timothy, where he declares them to be 'Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.' 1st Thess. v. 21."

Though progress could be reported, in the midst of opposition, both in Doncaster and in the neighbourhood, it was not so in every case. High Green, which had been visited by Mr. Grimshaw, by Mr. Edwards*, of Leeds, John Thorpe, Wm. Green, Joseph Rose, and others, was now abandoned, for reasons assigned in Chap. V. Great labour had been bestowed upon this place: no care, no cultivation had been wanting; but, alas, like the unfruitful tree, upon whose form the sun has shed his benign influence, and whose roots have been moistened with the rains and dews of heaven, a considerable portion of the labour had been in vain, and the axe and the fire were likely to be its destiny. It had been one of John Thorpe's favourite places before he left the Methodist body, at which he regularly preached every Sunday morning at eight o'clock, and often on the Saturday evening. From thence the preachers proceeded to Ecclesfield, where they preached at one o'clock at noon: other places were supplied in the evening with a sermon. Prior to the abandonment of High Green, a circumstance occurred, which, though beneficial in its effects, was rather ludicrous in its nature. A person of the name of Reuben Batty lived there, whose wife was a violent persecutor. This female entered the congregation, as she had frequently done before, and ordered her husband home. Reuben took hold of her in great good nature, and being an athletic

* Mr. Edwards was a native of Ireland. He entered the itinerant life in the year 1747; but having embraced the Calvinist doctrines, he left the Methodist connexion, and settled at Leeds in 1753 or 1755, where he gathered a large congregation, who erected for him a commodious chapel. His ministerial abilities were of a superior cast; he was extensively useful, and universally respected; he died in great peace, and deeply lamented by his flock, in 1784.

man, held her before the preacher till he finished his discourse. The word made an impression upon her heart, she changed her line of conduct, and thankfully acknowledged to John Cooper, of Charton Brook, some time afterwards, that she viewed religion very differently from what she was formerly led to view it.

Potter-hill and Ecclesfield were still visited; and some attempts were made to introduce preaching into Chapeltown. A person still living, heard Wm. Green preach at the latter place, in a small house, in the course of this year. His text was, "Ye must be born again."

It appears to have been the general practice of the male population at this period, in the parish of Ecclesfield, to attend Divine service on the Sabbath-day afternoon, when the more profligate part of them availed themselves of the opportunity of retiring to an adjacent public-house, after the congregation was dismissed, for the purpose of concluding the day with rioting and drunkenness. James Bailey, of Potter-hill, now a member of the New Connexion, was rather late on one of these occasions, and found the house so full of company on his arrival, that he was obliged to take his station out of doors. He contrived, however, to secure such a situation as would admit of a pretty fair view of what was passing; and so much was he shocked with this profanation of the Christian Sabbath, that he was resolved never more to enter the place. He soon joined the Methodist Society at Potter-hill; and was in the habit of going, with his brother, sisters, and other friends, to Thorp, Greasbro', and the Holmes, near Rotherham, on the same day, to hear preaching.

The Conference was held at Manchester this year, and for the first time the stations of the preachers were printed.* The preachers for Sheffield were Peter Jaco

* This Conference was held August 30, according to the printed Minutes, vol. i., p. 46; and according to Mr. Wesley in his Journals vol. iv., p. 256, it commenced August 20th, and terminated on the 23d. In such a case, it was an easy matter for the printer to insert the 3 instead of the 2. But there are other important corrections and additions which might be made in a future edition of the early Minutes, and the following remarks may shew the propriety and possibility of such improvement.

Mr. Wesley observes, "Monday 15th, (June, 1747,) our Conference

and Paul Greenwood. Epworth and Leeds had now no connexion with Sheffield as a circuit. The two men who were now stationed here, were eminent for piety and usefulness, and well calculated to allay the feverish

began, and ended on Saturday 20th. The Minutes of all that passed therein, were, some time after, transcribed and published." Journals, vol. ii., p. 394. In an old well-written *manuscript* of the late John Nelson's, furnished to the writer by his grandson, several particulars are noticed, which are not to be found in the printed Minutes. The regular discussions of the *first four days* of the Conference of 1747 are distinctly marked, which is not the case in the printed Minutes: nor are many of the subjects in the printed copy inserted in the regular order, as to *time*, while the names of persons present at the discussions are omitted. Of this the editor was aware, and hence, in a note on the discussions of the Conference of 1744, he remarks,—"Some of the following rules and regulations, which we find placed under this date, and that of June 29th, seem evidently to have been made in some future Conferences, although all previous to the year 1763, in which year that extract of the Minutes was published, from which we copy them." Minutes, vol. i., p. 9. Oct. Edit. In the Minutes of 1744, are to be found the discussions of 1747, according to the old MS. Had the editor been favoured with the MS., he would undoubtedly have availed himself of its contents; but he was not thus favoured, and has to complain,—"The great chasm in the annual Minutes which occurs here (from 1749 to 1765) may be accounted for by considering, that the doctrines and principal parts of discipline of the Methodists being agreed upon, Mr. Wesley, it appears, discontinued publishing the Minutes annually till 1765: at least, if any were published, we cannot find that a single copy of them is extant." Minutes, vol. i., p. 46. The small copy, printed in London, 1763, which now lies before the writer, and from which the octavo edition professes to be taken, omits the Minutes, as to *date*, both of 1747 and 1748, and commences the Conference of May 24, 1746, with the question, "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and called of God to preach?" p. 18; thus leaving out a number of other questions stated in the *octavo* edition to have been discussed at the time. Vol. i., pp. 25 to 29. Besides this, there is a clashing in point of dates. The *small* edition states the Conference to have commenced May 24, 1746, without naming the *place*, which, according to Mr. Wesley's Journal, vol. ii., p. 342, was on a *Saturday*, a very unlikely day for such a meeting, at which time Mr. Wesley was in *London*; whereas, in the large edition, it is stated to have commenced May 13th; and though Mr. Wesley was at *Bristol*, in which place the same edition states the Conference to have been held, yet we find him leaving *Bristol* in the course of a day or two, and preaching at *Bath*, &c., when the early Conferences generally lasted about a *week*. Now, what speaks more for the correctness of the *small* edition of 1763, is, that it was printed under the superintendance of Mr. Wesley himself, who must have been aided by his Journals in reference to date: and though *Saturday* was not at all a likely day to begin a Conference, yet from the 24th to the 30th of May, forms nearly a blank in Mr. Wesley's Journals, during most of which period the Conference was probably held. No Conference, it is true, is noticed in the Journals of that period in *London*; but that silence must operate as powerfully against its being held in *Bristol* at the time specified, seeing that it is there equally maintained.

Where there are acknowledged difficulties and conflicting statements, it is pleasing to see them surmounted and corrected. In the large edition, the Conference of 1747 begins on the *Tuesday*, without any notice of the previous day, which, according to the quotation from

heats which had been occasioned by Mr. Bryant's division. Peter Jaco was born at Newlyn, near Penzance, in Cornwall, in 1729. He was one of the first race of Methodist preachers; and few names, with the excep-

Mr. Wesley's Journal, vol. ii., p. 394, commenced on the *Monday*. Agreeably to the period fixed by Mr. Wesley, the old MS. reads,—

“MONDAY, June the 15th, 1747,

“The following persons being met at the Foundry, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Westley Hall, and Charles Manning, it was inquired,

“Quest. 1. Which of our brethren shall we invite, to be present at this Conference?

“Ans. John Jones, Thomas Maxfield, Jon. Reeves, John Nelson, John Bennet, John Downes, Thomas Crouch, Robert Swindels, and John Maddern: who were accordingly brought in.” These are names unnoticed in the printed Minutes, as present on the occasion. When they were introduced, the question was then proposed,

“Quest. 2. How may the time of this Conference be made more eminently a time of prayer, watching, and self-denial? Which question is also proposed in the Minutes for 1744, receiving an answer including three particulars. See Minutes vol. i., pp. 3, 4; see also small edit. of 1763, p. 2. The same answer is given in the MS., but its date of proposal is 1747.

“Quest. 3. Should we at every Conference read over all the Conferences we have had from the beginning?

“Ans. Only that immediately preceding; and so much of the rest as we may find needful from time to time.

“Quest. 4. In our first Conference it was agreed to examine every point from the foundation. Have we not been somewhat fearful of doing this? What were we afraid of?—of overturning our first principles?

“Ans. Whoever was afraid of this, it was a vain fear.” Then follows in the MS. the remainder of the answer, as in the Minutes of 1744, vol. i., p. 4; small edit. p. 2.

Questions 5 and 6 are the same, with their answers, as in the Minutes of 1744, vol. i., p. 4; small edit. p. 2. The questions refer to the extent in which one person may submit to the judgment of another.

“Quest. 7. Shall each of us read over all the tracts which have been published, before our next Conference? And write down every passage we do not approve, or do not fully understand?

“Ans. Every one answered in order, ‘I will endeavour so to do.’”

The above comprises part of the business of the *Monday*; and it is in reference to *this Conference*, that Mr. Wesley says, “The Minutes of all that passed therein, were, some time after, transcribed and published;” but according to the old MS., only *part* has reached us, and portions even of that are assigned to other periods. The discussions of Friday and Saturday are not distinctly noticed in the MS. The whole of the conversations assigned to Wednesday, June 17, 1748, in the collected edition of the Minutes, vol. i., p. 35, are said to have taken place, in the MS. copy, on Wednesday, June 17, 1747: and that these conversations ought not to be assigned to 1748, according to the printed copy referred to, appears pretty evident from hence,—that Mr. Wesley is silent in respect to any Conference in June 1748. See Journals, vol. ii., p. 442, where he is engaged, not in *Conferences*, but in *preaching* and *travelling*. It will be found also, in the same page, that the *Wednesday* in June, 1748, was on the *fifteenth*, and not on the *seventeenth*. From the manner, indeed, in which No. 5 follows No. 4, in Minutes, vol. i., pp. 32 and 35, without specifying the *year* after “Wednesday, June 17th,” p. 35, as in other cases, and from the conversations being the same as those which took place on the *Wednesday* in the MS., in the same

tion of Messrs. WESLEY and Whitfield, are more frequently noticed in the lives and experience of the preachers and the people, in early Methodism, as having been useful to them, than that of Mr. Jaco's. He is mentioned with great respect in a letter of Mr. Walter Shirley's to Mr. WESLEY.* His life is to be found in the first volume of the Methodist Magazine. So early as 1754, the period assigned for the commencement of his itinerant life, we find him in Yorkshire.† Various were the hardships he underwent. "In some places," says he, "the work was to begin; and in most places, being in its infancy, we had hardly the necessities of life: so that after preaching three or four times a day, and riding thirty or forty miles, I have often been thankful for a little clean straw, with a canvass sheet to lie on."‡ He was obliged to desist from travelling some years before his death, through physical indisposition. His end was peace. He died at Margate, in Kent, July 6, 1781, and was interred in the New Chapel burying-ground, City-road, London. Paul Greenwood, the other preacher, began his ministerial labours in 1747. He was well known in Rossendale, in Lancashire, by the appellation of Mr. Grimshaw's *man*;§ and was on terms of intimacy with Mr. G., from whom he received advice. "Paul Greenwood," says John Olivers, "was a man of a truly excellent temper, and exemplary behaviour. He was constantly serious, but not sad; he

month, it should seem that the evidence is in favour of the MS., and that there must be some mistake, in making No. 5 a *separate Minute* for a *separate year*. The words in the MS. are *verbatim* with those in the large edit. for Wednesday, June 17, 1748.

Page 1 of the MANUSCRIPT commences with Monday, and to p. 5, part is omitted in the printed Minutes.—Pages 5 to p. 13, embrace the matter which is printed in the Tuesday of the large edition.—Pages 13 to p. 28 are in the Wednesday of the large edition.—At the close of p. 28, the subject of "*Discipline*" is introduced, and is carried on to p. 34, containing matter that is not in the printed Minutes.—Page 35 commences a new subject, and goes on to p. 41, with matter not in the printed Minutes; then p. 43 again to the end.

This MS. might be rendered useful in the case of a *second* edition of the Minutes of Conference. Had it not been for the *locality* of the present history, the discrepancies should have been distinctly marked, the omissions printed in full, and the dates of the several Minutes, as far as they could be ascertained, specified; and yet, thanks will perhaps scarcely be awarded for what has been done!

* Meth. Mag. 1797, p. 408. † Ibid. for 1778, p. 544. ‡ Ibid,
§ Myles's Life of Grimshaw, p. 17, 29.

was always cheerful, but not light. And the people drank into the same spirit.”* He died in the month of March, 1767, about seven months after he left this circuit. “He was taken ill,” says Mr. Pawson, “of a very bad fever at Warrington: and notwithstanding he was delirious most of the time of his sickness, yet all his conversation was spiritual and heavenly. The first time the gentleman, at whose house he lodged, perceived that he was in a delirium, was upon asking Mr. Greenwood how he did; he answered, ‘They tell me that the heavens and the earth are fled away, and there is no more place found for them.’ Mr. Gaskill replied, ‘Well, if they are, we shall have new heavens and a new earth, you know.’ ‘That is true,’ said Mr. Greenwood, and was out of bed in a moment. When he got to the window, he observed, ‘The Lord hath spared this corner where we live; what a mercy that is!’ The last night of his life, he preached and prayed the whole time, till day-light appeared in the morning. He then said, ‘Another sun shall arise; Christ the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings;’ and immediately fell asleep in the Lord. It is something remarkable, that his aged mother, a most excellent Christian, died happy in the love of God, at Keighley in Yorkshire, the same morning. What a joyful surprise, when those two kindred spirits met together at the gates of heaven!”*

1766. These two good men laboured in love with each other and with the people, while on the circuit; but not without much opposition from several young men, from sixteen to twenty years of age, at the head of whom was a person whose name need not be recorded. Through the whole of the winter, Mulberry-street Chapel was beset, within and without, by these disorderly ruffians, who were encouraged by their buffoon-general. The cloaks and gowns of females were frequently cut in pieces with knives and scissors; at other times, the chief entered the chapel in harlequin attire, with a cat or a fowl concealed under his clothes, which, by torturing, continued to mew or chuckle to the great annoyance of both preacher and people; keeping up the

* Meth. Mag. 1779, p. 426.

† Ibid. for 1795, p. 148.

laughter of his companions at the same time, by every species of grimace and buffoonery. When expelled from the interior of the building, he contrived to scale the roof, where, in front of a large sky-light, nearly over the pulpit, he attempted to mimic the preacher. Unable to practise this as often as he wished, and irritated with the repeated checks which were received, he, and his associates, assailed the windows; and such was the violence employed, that the friends were driven to the necessity of having shutters for the windows, both above and below, the impressions of the hinges of which are still visible in the window-frames of the old building. This being done, they were still annoyed, with the noise of bricks, stones, sticks, and other instruments playing against the wood.

It is to these disorders Mr. WESLEY refers, in his visit to Sheffield, in March, 1766. On his route hither, he says, "Monday, 24, We rode to Derby. I never saw this house full before, the people in general being profoundly careless. I endeavoured to shew them their picture, by enlarging on these words, 'Gallio cared for none of these things.' Tuesday, 25, at ten, I preached in their new house at Creitch, about twelve miles from Derby, to a loving, simple-hearted people, many of whom felt what I spoke of 'fellowship with the Father and with the Son.' Thence we rode on through several heavy showers of snow to Sheffield, where, at six, we had a numerous congregation. There has been much disturbance here this winter. But all was peace to-night. Thursday, 27, I preached in the morning at a little village, near Eyam, in the High Peak. The eagerness with which the poor people devoured the word, made me amends for the cold ride over the snowy mountains."*

Tranquil as the evening was when Mr. WESLEY preached, it was only one of those sudden calms which the experienced mariner is led to contemplate as the sure presage of an approaching storm. The tempest again burst forth, and raged with but few intervals of repose till the middle of summer, when an awful Provi-

* Journals, vol. iv. p. 269.

dence terminated it for a period. During the races at Sheffield, the riot-leader, who was an expert swimmer, and had acquired considerable celebrity as a diver, went with several of his associates to the Don, in order to bathe. After he had dived several times across the river, at a place called the Butts, he elevated himself on a large post which stood by the edge of the water, and with an air of triumph mingled with mirth, exclaimed, "Another dip, and then for a bit more sport with the Methodists!" He threw himself off his point of elevation; but it was his last dip! It is supposed that he was either stunned by the violence of the fall, or that going head foremost, he sunk among the mud and was unable to disengage himself. However that might be, it was some time before he was found, and when brought out, too late for all attempts at resuscitation. Mr. Benjamin Wilkinson, who has been a member of the Methodist Society upwards of half a century, was present when the man employed the above language, and saw him take the fatal leap. "The Methodists," said the opposers of the truth, as if aware that the catastrophe would admit of an unfavourable inference, and as if determined to blunt its edge by being beforehand with them, "the Methodists will say this is a judgment." Any inference of the Methodists, after this, had been unnecessary; and they left the unfortunate sufferer, as they are disposed to leave every other persecutor, with the Judge of all the earth, who will do right.

It was at the time of the races *, that Mr. Whitfield visited Sheffield for the last time. He preached in Mulberry-street Chapel, at five o'clock in the morning, on "So run that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix. 24. He intended to have gone to see Elizabeth Booth, of Woodseats, at whose house he had lodged, and in whose orchard he had preached in years past, but was prevented by Mr. Edward Bennet, who, in consideration of his great indisposition at the time, was persuaded that the fatigue would be too much for him.

The Society in Sheffield, like the temple which was

* Hunter traces this amusement no further back than 1713, and ascribes its death-blow to the Inclosure Bill. *Hist. of Hallam.*, p. 196.

built in "troubulous times," continued to add to its members; and one who joined it at this time was the present Thomas Holy, Esq. He was born in the year 1752, and had just returned from Northampton, where he had been receiving his education at the school of Mr. Ryland, father of Dr. Ryland, now of Bristol. The Doctor was then a boy in the same class, and sate next T. Holy at school. Since that time, the Doctor has always recollected with feelings of pleasure his old school-fellow; and a few years back, when the Baptist Academy at Bristol was involved in pecuniary difficulties, he wrote to Mr. Holy, soliciting his aid and his influence in its behalf. After contributing liberally himself, Mr. Holy collected from Mr. Walker, of Rotherham, and others, several sums of ten pounds each, and forwarded the whole to his early school associate, who gratefully acknowledged the benefaction. Mr. Holy entered the class of the late James Walker, of whom he always entertained the highest opinion, and whose class then met at the foot of what is now called Paradise-square. He met with much opposition from those that are "without;" but was greatly encouraged by his pious mother, the delight of whose soul it was to see her child united to that body of professing Christians whom she herself had chosen as the people of God.

Several attempts have been made by the members of the Establishment, to shew the Methodists their errors by the circulation of a small tract, entitled, "An Earnest and Affectionate Address to the People called Methodists," published under the patronage of "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." This tract was circulated in the neighbourhood at this period, and among others, Wm. Green, of Rotherham, had one put into his hand. It appears from the fragment of a MS. which still survives, that William had contemplated a reply to the "Address;" but how far he proceeded in the prosecution of his design, there are now no means of ascertaining: * nor is it known what number of pro-

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The time at length arrived for a change of preachers, and Robert Roberts and Joseph Guilford were appointed for the Sheffield circuit, at the Conference held at Leeds, August 12.* This is the first year of publishing the number of members in each circuit, and the separate sums of money granted to the different places, which experienced temporal embarrassment. The number of members in the Sheffield circuit, embracing at least what is now comprised in the Doncaster, Worksop, Redford, Mansfield, Chesterfield, Bakewell, Bradwell, Barnsley, and Rotherham circuits, only stood at 583. Sheffield received £5, Rotherham £10, and Derby £20, from the Conference, to aid them under some pecuniary difficulties.†

Mr. Roberts, who succeeded Mr. Jaco as superintendent, was born at Upton, near Chester, in 1731. He entered the work of the ministry in 1759, and died in the faith of Christ in 1800. He was a man of great respectability and integrity, sound in judgment, and unblameable in conversation. His colleague, Mr. Guilford, had been in the army several years; he became a Methodist preacher in 1761, and died in triumph in 1777. While he was in the army, the Duke of Cumberland, who was then Commander-in-chief, was desired by some of the enemies of religion, to put a stop to the meetings of the praying soldiers. One day the Duke was passing by where a number of them were

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† Ibid. pp. 54, 55.

gathered together praying. Mr. Guilford was then engaged in that divine exercise; and while the Duke was listening at the door, he was earnestly intreating God in behalf of His Majesty King George, and all the royal family. The Duke, who heard him with deep attention, seemed much affected; and said to those who were with him, "I would to God that all the soldiers in the British army were like these men!"* He brought the hero out of the army with him, and feared the face of no man. While he was at Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, to which the circuit appears to have then extended, he was rendered useful in the conviction of Mr. Berrisford, in explaining the parable of the barren fig-tree.†

After the business of the Conference was closed, Mr. WESLEY left Leeds, and reached Rotherham, August 17. The next day, instead of coming on to Sheffield, he changed his route, and arrived at Leicester the same night, on his road to London.‡

The Rotherham Society, which, above others, was favoured on the present occasion by a visit from its head, was called to witness a very solemn dispensation. While Mr. Guilford was giving tickets on a Sunday afternoon, at half-past one o'clock, in Wm. Green's house, to the members of Mrs. Green's class, a female of the name of Betty Rowley was present to receive her token of church-fellowship. Mr. Guilford, having been informed of the violent persecution she experienced from her husband, said, "Betty, if you had no connection with the Methodists, and were persuaded that, by uniting yourself to them, you would meet with all the opposition you have hitherto had to bear, could you, do you think, cheerfully go through the whole, and join yourself to them?" "O yes, Sir," she exultingly replied; "if I was aware that I had ten times more to suffer, I could undergo the whole in the service of the Lord." She sate by the side of a couch, and the words were no sooner uttered, than she almost instantly fell back, and expired. Whenever this good woman went to chapel in the evening, she was invariably locked out,

* Atmore's Meth. Mem., p. 171.
‡ Journals, vol. iv, p. 288.

† Meth. Mag. 1805, p. 98.

and turned to the door for the night. Under these circumstances, she frequently returned to the chapel, and slept in one of the pews all night, with the Bible for her pillow, to be ready for five o'clock preaching next morning.

CHAP. XVI.

*The Pulpit and Reading Desk—Wesley's Appeals and Sellon's Tracts—
Benjamin Barber—Letter of a tenant to his landlord—Messrs. Brown
and Shaw—Death of Mrs. Holy—George Paramore and Francis
Hawke—Messrs. Costerdine and Witt in—Preaching at Blythe—
Death of Mrs. Johnson, of Barley Hall—Samuel Smith—Parson
Greenwood—A Society formed at Rawmarsh.*

1767. A PAMPHLET appeared this year, entitled, "A Dialogue between the Pulpit and the Reading Desk," 12mo. pp. 93. This pamphlet has been erroneously ascribed to the Rev. Vincent Perronet, late vicar of Shoreham, in Kent; while, with others, it has passed without any author's name being affixed to it: both of these classes of people have now to be informed, that it was written and published by Wm. Green, of Rotherham. He styles himself in the title-page, "A member of the Church of England," firmly believing in the doctrines embodied in the Liturgy, Homilies, and Articles of the Establishment. The leading doctrines of the gospel are clearly stated, and well supported by the writer. The Pulpit is perhaps scarcely permitted to have a sufficient share in the conversation; and the Reading Desk, which takes the side espoused by the author, was, as is the case in all Dialogues, certain to obtain the polemical palm. The writer was probably urged to its publication, through the circulation of the tract, entitled, "An Earnest and Affectionate Address to the People called Methodists," which proceeded from the clergy of the Established Church, concluding a counter address necessary, in a conversational form; and certainly the one came from a pious Methodist with as suitable a grace, as the other came from the less zealous and less correct of the clergy, some of whom were industrious in the circulation of the "Affectionate

Address" in the neighbourhood where Wm. Green resided. Wm. Green's pamphlet was well timed; it was extremely popular for several years, and sold at 8d. An edition of it was printed by a bookseller in 1817, at Lancaster, which is now published by Seely, publisher of the Christian Guardian, the Missionary Register, and other publications belonging to the low-church party.

In addition to the "Pulpit and the Reading Desk," Mr. WESLEY'S "Appeals," 6d. each, began to be for the first time circulated in the neighbourhood; also the tracts of the Rev. Walter Sellon, especially his answer to Hervey's "Aspasio." From hence, as from an arsenal, the members of Society were enabled to draw forth those weapons by which they defended themselves from the attacks made upon them by the high-church party, and those who embraced the creed of Mr. Whitfield, from a portion of each of which some rude attacks were occasionally experienced.

They were not arguments, however, either from Scripture or reason, that would always smooth the brows of those who opposed the Methodists; nor were arguments in every instance employed by such opposers. Landlords not unfrequently threatened to unhousc those of their tenants who encouraged the Methodists, and in some instances put their menaces into execution. A letter now lies before the writer, of a tenant to his landlord on this particular subject, preserved by W. Green; the case occurring either in Rotherham or its immediate vicinity. The poor man proceeds thus:—

"Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for your letter; I never met with such freedom before from my superiors, not even when I was guilty of many vices, and in the broad way to destruction: no one ever took such pains at that period with me to show me my danger. I must confess I am very ignorant, and shall be obliged to any one who will shew me my error from Scripture. But, Sir, there are some hard words in your letter, which I do not understand. What is it, Sir, that you mean by *conventicles*? Do you refer to those places in which

people meet to sing Psalms, read the Word of God, and pray together? If so, I hope there is not any thing in this, Sir, contrary to either the laws of God or of man. Thank the Lord! we are blessed with liberty of conscience, and Christ declares, that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he is there in the midst of them. It can surely be no crime in churchmen doing these things; and those with whom I am connected stick close to the church, and have no desire to leave it. Can any of us be too good? or were any ever heard to say in their last hours, they had done too much good for heaven? You are aware how persons can meet daily in public houses to drink, carouse, and swear; and yet how few stewards or landlords threaten to turn them out of doors. But is it any wonder? We have often heard, and often thought, that it was hard usage for Christ to be born in a stable, when no place was found for him in the inn! Even so, as it was in the beginning, so it ever will be. Noah, Lot, the children of Israel, the prophets and apostles, met with the like treatment. We hear, however, that it is dangerous for persons to offend any of these little ones: and, if it should ever so happen, that I shall be turned out of my house, that God whom I serve will provide for me; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. I can easily account for you being displeased with me, because of me making my house a house of prayer. I believe, Sir, it is not your disposition to distress a poor man; it belongs chiefly to others who have put you upon this. Nevertheless, I shall make no promise, either in one way or other: if the Methodists come to my house, I shall not turn them out; and if some prevail on you to do what you threaten, I shall think good Mr. Bower is changed into Bishop Bonner. From, Sir,

“ Your servant,

“ 1767.

“ R. Sh——.”

When the numbers in Society were taken, to forward to the Conference, which was held in London, Aug. 18, they were found to amount to 591, an increase only of eight members throughout the circuit during the year, allowing for deaths, removals, &c. The preachers

appointed to succeed Messrs. Roberts and Guilford, were Mr. Isaac Brown and Mr. John Shaw. The latter of these good men began his itinerant career in 1762, and terminated it in 1793. The following testimony is borne to his character and ministry by the Conference:—“ He laboured for thirty years as a travelling preacher; was useful in every circuit where he was stationed, and died with unshaken confidence in God.”*

Though the circuit continued of unwieldy extent, it was narrowed a little this year by a transfer of Buxton, Tideswell, and other places in the High Peak of Derbyshire, which had hitherto been supplied by the Sheffield preachers, to Manchester.† This change was attended with advantage to the places thus given up, which, from their contiguity to others, visited by the Manchester preachers, could be more frequently supplied with preaching.‡

Bradwell was still retained, and was one of the furthest places to the west, which the Sheffield preachers continued to visit. Here Benjamin Barber resided, and was the principal stay of the little Society. This good man was applied to by some persons who held shares of a lead mine, near Foolow, Derbyshire, to supply the place of several agents, who, in succession, had proved unfaithful to their trust. No one appeared so likely for their purpose as Benjamin; but — Clay, Esq., near Sheffield, who held the principal share of the mine, was to be consulted, and they knew not how far his prejudices against the Methodists might operate against self-interest. However, Benjamin was sent to him with a note of recommendation highly in his favour. He was found, on the closest examination, every way competent to the work: but as though Mr. Clay had received some previous information on the subject, he asked, “ What is your religious profession?” “ A Methodist, Sir,” was the reply. “ If you engage in this work, I shall expect you to renounce all connection with the Methodists, and rigidly to attend to the service of the Church of England.” “ Sir,” said Benjamin, “ I am a

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 265. † Meth. Mag. 1817, p. 367. ‡ Journals, vol. iv. p. 372.

poor man, and have a large family to support; but if that be one of the conditions of our agreement, I must say, that, from the good I have derived from the Methodists; rather than renounce them, I will beg my bread from door to door first." The gentleman finding him firm, dismissed him by saying, that he might enter upon the situation on trial. The whole of the partners proved him to be a man of sterling integrity, and were soon convinced that it was their interest to preserve such a valuable acquisition to the concern. Whenever Benjamin, after this, had occasion to visit Mr. Clay, he was invariably placed at the same table with himself, whatever company might be present; and received the appellation of "my trusty servant Benjamin." Mr. Clay left it in his will, that Benjamin, on the supposition of the mine failing, should receive his regular salary for life, as a token of the high respect he entertained for him. Benjamin was a class-leader and exhorter; and, in connexion with Mr. Matt. Mayer, was one of the apostles of the Peak. To few men, after David Taylor and John Bennet, were the miners of Derbyshire more greatly indebted, than to Mr. Matt. Mayer, of Stockport, and Benjamin Barber, of Bradwell. Benjamin, like others, carried the marks which some of the persecutors had made upon his frame to the grave with him.

1768. Little as the year preceding is distinguished for variety of incident, it is preserved in countenance by the present, which, but for two or three particulars, might be passed over unnoticed. But one of those particulars is important of itself, and was deeply felt by the Society in Sheffield,—the death of Mrs. Holy, mother of the present T. Holy, Esq. She was born, December, 1725. Her husband, who died previous to her union with the Methodists, was a man that feared God. They were tenderly attached to each other; and such was the effect his death produced upon her spirits, that, had she not obtained experimental religion, there is little doubt that it would have terminated in her own. She wore her mourning attire to the close of life. Her funeral sermon was preached by the late Mr. Matt. Mayer, of Stockport, in Mulberry-street Chapel, on which solemn occasion several persons were deeply awaken-

ed.* Her life had been highly exemplary, and her end was truly blessed. She met in the class that was held in the house of Luke Staniforth, No. 2, Silver-street. The following anecdote, which, with other particulars, was related to the writer by Mr. Holy, it would be unpardonable not to notice, though not related with a view to publication. After Mr. Holy was of age, he was rallied by an acquaintance for connecting himself with a people so mean as the Methodists, and a people too, he observed, " who never had done any good in the world, but rather harm." Mr. H. asked, " Is that your serious opinion, Sir?" The gentleman replied, " It is." It was immediately rejoined, " Pray what is your candid opinion of the case of my mother, whose memory, I know, is dear to you?" It was returned, " Well, I really do think, if some change had not taken place, the influence which your father's death had upon her was such, that it would have been fatal to her life; but then it comes to the same end at last, for excessive joy and excessive grief produce the same effects on the human system; in the one case she would have died of grief, in the other she died of joy." This is a noble testimony in favour of experimental religion, though reluctantly dragged forth, and disfigured in its detail.

While the Society had to record the inroads made by death upon its number, it also had to register, in other instances, a life from the dead. Two of these may be noticed, George Paramore and Francis Hawke. The former was born at Doncaster, and was apprenticed to a printer in Sheffield, where, through the instrumentality of an elder brother, his mind was seriously impressed with the importance of Divine subjects: and from a conviction of the necessity and advantage of Christian fellowship, he now, in the 14th year of his age, joined the Society, and was soon made a partaker of the consolations of the Holy Spirit. He met with great opposition, and endured various hardships in and from the family with whom he lived. He was enabled, however, to maintain his ground; and throughout the whole course of his pilgrimage, was thankful that his lot

* Meth. Mag. 1816, p. 166.

poor man, and have a large family to support; but if that be one of the conditions of our agreement, I must say, that, from the good I have derived from the Methodists; rather than renounce them, I will beg my bread from door to door first." The gentleman finding him firm, dismissed him by saying, that he might enter upon the situation on trial. The whole of the partners proved him to be a man of sterling integrity, and were soon convinced that it was their interest to preserve such a valuable acquisition to the concern. Whenever Benjamin, after this, had occasion to visit Mr. Clay, he was invariably placed at the same table with himself, whatever company might be present; and received the appellation of "my trusty servant Benjamin." Mr. Clay left it in his will, that Benjamin, on the supposition of the mine failing, should receive his regular salary for life, as a token of the high respect he entertained for him. Benjamin was a class-leader and exhorter; and, in connexion with Mr. Matt. Mayer, was one of the apostles of the Peak. To few men, after David Taylor and John Bennet, were the miners of Derbyshire more greatly indebted, than to Mr. Matt. Mayer, of Stockport, and Benjamin Barber, of Bradwell. Benjamin, like others, carried the marks which some of the persecutors had made upon his frame to the grave with him.

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* Meth. Mag. 1816, p. 166.

was cast among the children of God so early in life. When out of his apprenticeship, he went to London, and followed his business. Being often requested by his employers to work on the Lord's day, he conscientiously refused, for which he was discharged from his employ: but this, he remarked, turned, without exception, to his advantage, as he found a superior situation immediately. He was an useful and acceptable local preacher for thirty years, frequently visiting prisoners, and preaching in workhouses, &c. He also had the superintendance of the Conference printing-office some years. In his family, he was a priest, attending to the duties of religion, praying with them three times a day, singing the praises of God, and reading the Scriptures; often expressing the happiness he experienced in thus having an altar for God beneath the shadow of his own roof. His end was tranquil. He breathed his spirit into the hands of his Maker on Christmas day, 1812, in the 58th year of his age, at Hoxton.*

Before Francis Hawke was savingly converted to God, he was the subject of deep conviction. Hunter, speaking of the Sheaf, says, "In the year 1768, it carried down the houses which form the north side of Talbot's Hospital, when five of the pensioners lost their lives."† This terrible catastrophe was witnessed by Francis Hawke and many others; and when he saw the bodies of the sufferers taken out of the water, he was so impressed with the uncertain tenure on which human life is held, the necessary preparations for another, and the solemnities of death, that his conscience became alarmed. But though this was one of the days of his visitation, he did not yield himself up to God till some time after. The following is the purport of what he related to the late Mr. Barber, on the subject of his conversion to God. "I was a hard drinker, miserably poor, and had a wife and several children dependant upon me for support. Given to pleasure, I went to York races ‡, with only eightpence in my pocket. When, on my return, I was within about two miles of

* Meth. Mag. 1813, p. 473. † Hist. of Hallam. p. 3. ‡ A distance of between 50 and 60 miles.

Sheffield, I was so completely exhausted with walking and want of food, that I lay down to drink of a small brook which crossed the road. It refreshed me a little, but I felt as though I should be scarcely able to reach home. I thought within myself, that I had a hard master in the devil, who always kept me poor and miserable. Little encouragement as I had to pray, I lifted my heart up to God, and promised that if he would spare me, and give me strength to reach home, that I would from that hour begin to serve him. Strength seemed to be infused into me as I prayed; I felt revived, and at last arrived in Sheffield about midnight. My wife opened the door, there was nothing to eat in the house, I lay down, and after sleeping a few hours, went to my work. I wrought, wept, and prayed; and went in the evening to Mulberry-street Chapel. My convictions were increased, I went to Class, and at length obtained a sense of the Divine favour. One circumstance I cannot pass over, as it shews a kind Providence. It was some time before I got my debts paid; and on one occasion, I was reduced to a halfpenny. It was the evening on which I had to meet my class; but not having a penny *, like others, I was tempted not to go. After a great deal of reasoning, I at length went, found a halfpenny on the road, and since that day I have never wanted a penny for the cause of God." This statement he made to Mr. Barber, in 1785, at which period he was in respectable circumstances. He entertained Mr. WESLEY the last time he was in Sheffield. Through the same mysterious Providence which had raised him, he was again brought low; but never departed from his stedfastness in the Lord. When the question was first agitated respecting the erection of Carver-street Chapel, Francis prayed devoutly that he might be permitted to see it built, and also that he might be spared to see a Methodist Conference held in Sheffield. He was permitted to see both: the chapel was begun in 1804, and the Conference was held in it,

* The penny-a-week system, which properly originated with the Methodists, and was scouted by numbers, is now adopted by Bible, Missionary, and other Societies, by the very parties who condemned it, and has met with the most sturdy advocates.

July, 1805, two or three weeks after the close of which, Francis Hawke's funeral sermon was preached in the building, for the completion of which he had so fervently prayed.

In the month of July, Mr. WESLEY took Doncaster, Rotherham, and Sheffield, on his route to Madely*; and at the Conference held in Bristol, August 16, Mr. Robert Costerdine and Mr. John Wittam were stationed here. The numbers in Society were six hundred, an increase of nine. Mr. Costerdine, though never till now appointed to labour in the Sheffield circuit, had nevertheless preached a good deal about its confines. He was in the Epworth circuit in 1764, which extended to Blythe, in Nottinghamshire, within a short distance of which, the preachers from Sheffield went. He observes, “I received a letter from Blythe, containing an invitation to go and preach a club sermon. I found that it was a place which the Methodists had not visited. I took my stand under a sycamore tree in the market-place. The gentlemen who encouraged the club, ordered their men, with white wands, to keep order: hundreds of people attended, insomuch that the market-place was filled, as well as all the windows of the houses. Lord Scarborough, and a gentleman from Bawtry, were on my right hand, in their coaches. All was still as night, and I have cause to believe, that the word preached was attended with a blessing. After I had dismissed the congregation, I dined with the members of the club, and was astonished at their prudent behaviour; for all waited till I had asked a blessing, and likewise till I returned thanks. After dinner, several of the gentleman offered to pay me for my trouble, but I refused their offer. When the squire from Bawtry heard that I would accept no reward for my labour, he said, the report concerning the Methodists is false; for it is said that the preachers go about for money, but I learn that this preacher will take none, either directly or indirectly.”† As Mr. Costerdine was subsequently to this, again appointed to the Sheffield

* Journals, vol. iv. p. 372.

† Meth. Mem. 1814, p. 165.

circuit, his history will be renewed. His colleague, Mr. Wittam, had only itinerated a year, but died on the work at an advanced age. They laboured together in love, but saw little prosperity.

1769. February 18, 1769, good old Mrs. Johnson, of Barley Hall *, took her flight to the paradise of God. At what period Mr. Johnson died, there are now no means of ascertaining. It was with emotions of pleasure that the writer of these pages visited the venerable domain while the history was in progress, where this pious pair lived and died, where Mr. WESLEY and the first Methodist preachers found a temple and a home; and, sketching the premises and grounds for future gratification, the work of the pencil was borne away with triumph. Prior to Mr. Johnson's occupation of the house and the farm, they belonged to a gentleman of the name of Hague, a tanner. Mr. Johnson, who succeeded him, carried on the skinning business, exclusive of tanning. After the death of Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, the farm passed into the hands of a Mr. Bowers, and it is now occupied by a person of the name of Ellis. The pits have long been filled up, and the ploughshare has passed over them. It is only known to Mr. Birks and a few more of the patriarchal race, that hides were tanned in that neighbourhood. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were originally Dissenters, and were brought among the Methodists through the instrumentality of David Taylor, who had acted as a pioneer to Mr. WESLEY in innumerable instances.

Like all the others through the connexion, this circuit continued to sustain occasional losses, by the removal of some of the most useful and popular local preachers, who entered upon a more extended scale of usefulness in engaging in the work of itinerancy. Samuel Smith, whose parents had been among the first to lodge the Methodist preachers, and who had acted sometime in the capacity of a local preacher, was appointed at the Conference held in Leeds, August 1, to labour in Derbyshire.† He preached with success for

* Originally Barley-hole, being partly in a hollow.
vol. i. p. 82.

† Minutes,

some years, but at length becoming inflated with pride, he left the work in 1782. He afterwards embraced the system of Baron Swedenburgh, and presided over a congregation in the city of Norwich, in which place he closed, with his life, his ministry.

At this Conference, the number of members through the whole circuit stood only at 595, a decrease of five, compared with the year preceding. The Society in Sheffield received from the Conference the sum of £8, Rotherham £29, and Bradwell £9, to relieve them in their necessitous circumstances: and the circuit in return, as its quota, had to contribute £3 15s. towards the support of preachers' wives.* The preachers appointed were Mr. Parson Greenwood, and Mr. James Longbotham, the latter of whom began to itinerate in 1765, and departed from the work, either for want of health or other circumstances, the year after he was stationed at Sheffield.

To the little Society in Rawmarsh, near Rotherham, the appointment of Parson Greenwood to the circuit is rendered memorable, being the first travelling preacher who opened his commission in the village. The following particulars were communicated by Mr. James Bennett, a member of that Society, and a local preacher in the Rotherham circuit. Previous to the formation of any Society in the town of Rotherham, there lived in Rawmarsh a good woman of the name of Alice Murfin, who was in the habit of going to Barley Hall for several years to meet in class, a distance of five miles. She stood alone as a Methodist in the village, and till Wm. Green fixed his residence in Rotherham, the only friends with whom she could take sweet counsel were those who met in class in the neighbourhood of Thorp. In common with most of the early Methodists, she "endured a great fight of afflictions" from the wicked, "whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." One thing in particular hurt her much, and the more so, as it became a source of temptation. She had a son an idiot; and such was the malignity of heart manifested by some of her neighbours, that, instead of sympa-

* Minutes, vol. i. pp. 85, 87.

thizing with her, they insinuated that it was a judgment of God inflicted upon her for her hypocrisy. She knew the integrity with which she acted, but still she did not know how far it might be a visitation of God for sins committed previous to her conversion to the truth. With equal simplicity and sincerity, she went to a pious minister who resided at Thribergh, to whom she unbosomed her mind. Like a man of God, he took up his Bible, and directed her attention to the case of the person born blind, in the 9th chap. of St. John's gospel,— “And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” He enlarged on these words, and the whole proved a source of comfort to the disconsolate mother. When the good woman obtained two or three religious companions, they alternately met in one another's houses to strengthen each other in the Lord. A lady seeing them walking together one day, rather sarcastically observed, “Birds of a feather flock together, I perceive.” “It is seldom,” replied Alice, “you find pigeons among crows.”

Wm. Green, who was the first local preacher that visited Rawmarsh, was induced to go thither at the suggestion of Mr. Burton, of Manchester, who, on his return home from visiting his brother-in-law, Mr. Joseph Hall, called at Rotherham, and spoke to him on the subject. Mr. Hall opened his house for preaching the night following, when Wm. Green was glad of the opportunity of favouring the people with a sermon. From that time, preaching was established among the Methodists in the village. The day on which Mr. P. Greenwood, for the first time, preached at Rawmarsh, was the memorable 5th of November, the very day on which the fact and the history of the little Society was penned for the press, to be handed down, with the preaching itself, to those who may follow the steps of such as have gone before,—a coincidence, which, as it only occurred while running along the sentence, the act of committing it to paper, trivial as it may appear, seemed irresistible. The morning following the preaching, the clergyman of

the parish inquired of one of his servants whether a large company had been collected around the bonfire the preceding evening. To which the person interrogated replied, "No, Sir, there were very few; most of the people were at Joseph Hall's." It was immediately demanded, "What were they doing there?" "Hearing the Methodist preacher," it was returned. Inquiry was next made respecting the landlord of Joseph Hall, when it was found that he rented the house of a person, who again held it, with other buildings, of an elderly gentlewoman. The latter accosted the first householder, when paying his rent, with, "What, your tenant has turned Methodist? and that is not all, but I understand he takes in the Methodist preachers?" "Madam," rejoined the man, who seemed possessed of very little of either fear or courtesy, "when we let a house, we never tell the people what sort of company they are to entertain in it; and be the man a Methodist, or what he will, it matters not to me, for he always pays his rent, and that is all I want." This is not the language of a man, who, if he valued what he tenanted, held it from year to year, but one who adapted his language to the length of the lease on which he held it. A Society was formed in the village by Mr. Greenwood; and on leaving the circuit, he wrote on a pane of the window of the house, as a kind of memento, the people being strongly attached to him, the following pious but very humble lines, which were greatly in use about this period, and evince a proximity of taste with the lovers of Sternhold and Hopkins, in such as departed from Mr. WESLEY's excellent Collection of Hymns:—

" Farewell, my dearest friends, farewell,
Since we awhile must parted be,
Until we land on Zion's hill,
My dearest brethren, pray for me :

And if I never see you more,
Till time commence eternity,
This favour of you I implore,
My dearest brethren, pray for me."

Joseph Hall, who received a prophet in the name of a

prophet, has since gone to reap a prophet's reward. His good wife, after being much exercised with perplexing though frequently groundless fears, through life, died rejoicing in God, February, 1799; and Joseph finished his course in peace, August, 1803.

CHAP. XVII.

Mr. Mayer—Chapel erected in Doncaster—Mr. Wesley—Messrs. Woodcock and Bardsley—How far a parent's voice ought to be heard on the marriage of a child—James Walker—Jeremiah Cocker—Disturbance at Mulberry-street Chapel—Potter-Hill—Methodism introduced into Brimington.

1770. Mr. MATTHEW MAYER, who had preached Mrs. Holy's funeral sermon two years before, again visited Sheffield in the month of May. Previously to his coming to Sheffield, he had been exposed to the rain in the neighbourhood of Leeds, and not having taken the precaution to change his clothes, he caught a severe cold, which produced a good deal of fever, that was increased by the labours of the Sabbath. He had written, however, that he would be at Sheffield on the Monday evening, and he was determined, if possible, not to disappoint the Society. In this very unfit state, he rode on horse-back thirty miles in much pain, and when he arrived at Sheffield, was scarcely able to dismount. He was so lame that he could not walk to the chapel, but rode thither; and with difficulty ascended the pulpit. While engaged in the work of his Divine Master, he appears to have forgotten his indisposition; for he remarked on the occasion, “I began to preach in great pain, but, blessed be God, his presence gave ease in pain, and it was a blessed season to myself, and to many precious souls.” Next morning he was confined to bed of a severe rheumatic fever, which detained him three weeks in Mr. Holy's family, whose kindness and attention on the occasion Mr. Mayer always remembered with feelings of gratitude and respect.*

* Meth. Mag. 1816, p. 166.

An article among the papers of Wm. Green, of Rotherham, for this year, is headed thus:—"An account of the expense of my school-building in the preaching-house yard." This school, which cost between thirty and forty pounds, was built for the better accommodation of the children: its being built, however, in the chapel-yard, was no doubt for the better protection of the chapel itself from the despoiling hands of the enemies of Methodism, who availed themselves of every opportunity of injuring both persons and property.

Such was the state of the Society in Doncaster, as not only to require, but to effect the erection of a chapel. "Wednesday, July 11," says Mr. WESLEY, "I rode to Doncaster, and preached at noon at the new house: one of the neatest in England. It was sufficiently crowded, and, what is more strange, with serious and attentive hearers: what was more unlikely, some years since, than that such a house, or such a congregation, should be seen here? In the evening I preached at Finningley; the church was filled; but, I fear, few felt the word."^{*} From thence he proceeded into Lincolnshire; and on Monday the 23d of the same month returned, and "preached at Doncaster and Rotherham: on Tuesday and Wednesday at Sheffield. On Wednesday evening," he continues, "my heart was so enlarged that I knew not how to leave off. Do some say, 'I preach longer than usual, when I am barren?' It is quite the contrary with me. So that it is strange, if I exceed my time above a quarter of an hour."[†]

Though great harmony prevailed between the preachers and the people, and partial prosperity was experienced in particular Societies, yet when the numbers were taken to the Conference, which was held in London, August 7, they amounted throughout the whole circuit to only 597,—an increase of *two*. Samuel Woodcock and Samuel Bardsley were the preachers stationed here in the place of Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Longbotham. At this time, Sheffield received £48 : 10 : 2d. from the Conference to supply its deficiencies[‡], and had to provide for one wife, and the half

* Journals, vol. iv. p. 449.

† Ibid. p. 451.

‡ Minutes.

of the expense of a second, the additional half being so much more than that of the year preceding.

Samuel Woodcock entered the itinerant life in 1765, and departed from it in 1776. But little is known of either his usefulness or his abilities. Of Samuel Bardsley much more may be said; but as his character will again pass in review, it will here be necessary to observe brevity. It was with a feeling of peculiar pleasure, that the old gentleman, in open Conference, held at Sheffield in 1817, adverted to his first entrance into the town; and never shall the writer of these pages forget the effect which his simple apostolic address produced upon both preachers and people on the occasion. He contrasted the congregations accustomed to assemble in Norfolk and Carver-street Chapels, with that which attended his ministry in Mulberry-street in 1770,—the pacific spirit of 1817, when brought to bear upon the stormy spirit of earlier times,—and particularly noticed the welcome reception he experienced from the “warm-hearted Sheffield cutlers, who,” still to proceed with his own language, “when shaking hands, appeared as though they would squeeze the blood out at the fingers’ ends,” thus operating like the vices they were accustomed to handle. The attachment was mutual. One of the preachers, who succeeded Mr. Bardsley in the present appointment, writes thus to him:—“You love the Sheffield people, and they have nothing, I am sure, but love towards you. I can, ere this, prophesy my own love to them; and the reason which I have to assign for it, is that which was assigned by yourself, ‘There are many of them right precious in the sight of the Lord.’”

Mr. Bardsley had at this time some thoughts of entering into the marriage-state with a pious young female of the name of Mary Charlton. There are letters in the possession of the writer, detailing every plausible pretext both for and against such a step; and the result was, that he lived and died a bachelor. The subject is here noticed with a view to introduce a letter of Mr. WESLEY’s, which may be of some importance to the members of Society, as containing his opinion on a point which involves filial respect and filial duty.

“London, Nov. 24, 1770.

“ Dear Sammy,

“ According to your account the very same difficulty subsists to this day. Your mother is not willing: and I told you before, this is, in my judgment, an insuperable bar. I am fully persuaded that a parent has in this case a negative voice. Therefore, while matters continue thus, I do not see, that you can go any further. I am,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ J. WESLEY.

“ To Mr. Samuel Bardsley, at Mr. James Walker’s, in
“ Sheffield.”

While some of the brethren alleged the delicate state of the young woman’s health, the slender funds of the connexion to support others than single men, &c. &c., Mr. WESLEY very properly rested the principal weight of the objection to the marriage on the “ negative voice” of Mr. Bardsley’s mother. This opinion of Mr. WESLEY’s, which was given in other cases, when connected with peculiar circumstances, awarded to him considerable censure from such as were unacquainted with every peculiarity; but to say nothing of the arguments by which “ this case” might be supported, rendered so emphatic by him to whom Mr. Bardsley was accustomed to look up as his father in the gospel, it will be sufficient to accompany it at present with the example of the celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnson, who, at the age of twenty-five, when Mrs. Porter had signified her willingness to accept of his hand, travelled from Birmingham to Lichfield to ask the consent of his mother to the marriage *; a species of conduct which will be the subject of laughter, by those who imagine that parental restraint and authority expires with youth, and with whom passion has obtained the ascendancy over reason, but which affords us a view of one of the finest traits in his filial character.

The preachers appear now to have been resident with Mr. James Walker, the person to whose care the

* Boswell’s Life of Johnson.

letter to Mr. Bardsley was intrusted: and such was the veneration which the descendants of this good man had for Mr. Bardsley, who had been accustomed to prattle to him as children, but who themselves had children at the age of manhood when he latterly visited them, that they regularly entertained him, during successive Conferences, at their house in Sheffield. It was under Mr. Bardsley's ministry, and during this appointment to the circuit, that the late wife of Mr. Benjamin Wilkinson was brought to an experimental acquaintance with the truth of God. She was first allured to Mulberry-street Chapel by the charms of vocal music, the singing being much admired and well conducted. She died in 1820; and her death was an interesting and an instructive lesson to the writer, who saw and conversed with her a day or two previous to her death. Her funeral sermon was preached in Carver-street Chapel by Mr. Entwistle. Another of those who were brought to God under the ministry of Mr. Bardsley was, Mr. Crowder, of Rotherham, still living.

A little respite had been enjoyed by the Society in Sheffield from persecution; but as the evenings began to lengthen, the disturbers of civil and religious order increased in the violence of their proceedings. The principal friends were again compelled, as they often had been before, to watch the chapel doors during Divine service. To give, however, if possible, an early and an effectual check to such outrages, they resolved to make an example of the first of the disturbers that could be secured. It was one evening while Jeremiah Cocker was keeping watch, that the rabble assembled; and being an athletic man, he took hold of the ring-leader, and conducted him into the chapel. After the congregation was dismissed, he remained behind in a state of durance, with several of the friends, while the mob were bellowing without, and forming plans of rescue. Jeremiah Cocker requested James Walker, J. Paramore, and some others to protect him, some before and some behind, some to the right and some to the left, he himself taking upon him all responsibility for the security of the prisoner, whom they intended to take before a magistrate. The moment the chapel-doors

were opened, the rioters set up a shout; Cocker came out with a firm hold of the man; but such was the tumult and noise, that James Walker and the others were afraid of serious consequences, and returned into the chapel. It was too late for Cocker to secure a retreat, and he had too much daring about him to yield till overpowered by strength. He was borne away by the crowd, as by a torrent, into High-street, his feet scarcely touching the ground the greater part of the road; but still maintaining a stubborn hold of his captive. Various methods were tried when they got into High-street to effect a deliverance; but every effort proved abortive, till a small space was cleared, apparently by design, and a person of some weight ran towards Cocker, and threw himself with considerable violence immediately betwixt him and the person in custody, and falling upon the extended arm, broke the hold. The prisoner being disengaged, the next work was, to recompense Cocker for the active part which he had taken. Cocker had one fine quality for scenes of tumult and danger, that of courage, but he wanted temper: this frequently gave great uneasiness to his best friends. The mob knew their man; they knew that he was to be irritated, not intimidated, and acted accordingly. He took his first stand immediately opposite the gateway leading from High-street into Mulberry-street, with his back against the front of the house. Here his opposers held him like a stag at bay, forming a kind of crescent before him, no one daring to engage him singly, and each afraid, if properly roused, of the weight of his heavy hand. He recollects past insults, and saw several before him who had offered them. He began to lose his balance, and to feel partially inflamed with passion; and glancing his eyes fiercely from one to another, the quick succession of injuries which he had received seemed to prevent him for the moment from taking them in their turn; or, like a baited animal, who, surrounded by his tormentors, is at a loss to choose from the immediate objects of his ire. Just as his choler began to rise, an opening appeared to his left, when he burst away, with the crowd after him, and took his next stand near the passage leading from the Shambles to the Hartshead.

Imagining his courage to be failing him, the mob improved upon it, and began to press him a little closer, when he declared that the first who came within the reach of his arm should be laid upon the ground before him. This threat enraged two in particular, who went up to him, but who were no sooner within reach than both were knocked down. This occasioned considerable confusion and timidity, and the moment was embraced for flight. He took his third stand beneath a lamp in the Hartshead; and when properly fixed, he told them that he had now brought them into a narrower compass, and was apparently preparing for offensive operations. When this was observed by his pursuers, they fled, and he again endeavoured to escape. His flight was the signal for their return; they lost sight of him, and supposing him to have gone straight forward, they ran in that direction; but he had turned short to the left, just in the front of what is now the Iris-office, and took shelter in the house of James Walker. By that time, James had reached home, and, on seeing Jeremiah, said, "I was afraid they had killed you." "They might," it was replied, "for any aid which I received from those who ought to have supported me."

Though the conduct of the mob was highly discreditable, yet by no process of reasoning whatever can Cocker be justified for the part which he acted. There was too much of the *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, or of *like for like*, in his system; a law of which we have an early intimation among the Jews *, and which afterwards prevailed so much among the Greeks and Romans, but which our Lord condemned both in precept and practice. When he was reviled, he reviled not again: that law is peremptory, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."† Retaliation can only contribute to the support of that from which it originated, a vindictive, revengeful spirit. In case of assault, the laws of the land can be appealed to, both in civil and religious matters: or should an attempt be made upon life or property, from a villainous prin-

* Exod. xxi. 24.

† Matth. v. 39.

ple, without any reference to religious character, both duty and interest unite in urging even a Christian man to ward off the blow and repel the aggressor. But when opposition assumes the shape of persecution, or, in other words, when religion in one, is the cause or reason of hostility in another, then, to shew that that religion is actually possessed, its spirit should be displayed in the meek and quiet deportment of its professor; like the saints of old, who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, who considered it all joy that they were accounted worthy to suffer in the cause of Christ, and who suffered even to the death. Had Jeremiah Cocker permitted religion to have its full influence upon his heart, it would have tamed that spirit which was let loose in blows upon his persecutors. It is through such conduct that Methodism has occasionally been injured; when the weight of the odium has, for want of due discrimination, fallen upon *her* instead of the *man*, as though it was her peculiar genius to promote opposition.

Some of the smaller villages which had been favoured with the labours of the local preachers, received an occasional visit from the brethren stationed on the circuit. Such was the case with Potter-hill, according to information industriously obtained and obligingly imparted to the writer by Mr. Thomas Newton, of Thorncliffe. The poverty of the good people led them to equalize the expense as much as possible, as no one was found sufficiently opulent to sustain the whole; hence one person kept the preacher's horse, another boarded and lodged the preacher himself; and both the one and the other not unfrequently changed residences with the returning visit. From this period to 1792, the numbers in the small Society here remained stationary, a new member filling up a vacancy occasioned by death, and rarely exceeding sixteen or seventeen. Both here, and in the whole of the neighbouring Societies, the hymn, commencing with "The God of Abraham praise," composed by Mr. Thomas Olivers, was in high repute.

A circumstance which led to the introduction of Methodism into Brimington, a village in the neighbourhood of Chesterfield, ought not to be unnoticed, as it forms, in its leading character, a parallel case to that

of Onesimus's, so admirably improved by St. Paul in his Epistle to Philemon. There was a young man who absconded from his master and from his parents; during his absence, he heard the preachers in connexion with Mr. WESLEY, and, through their instrumentality, became a convert to the faith of Christ. Possessing the pearl of great price himself, he was not only led from principles of justice to return to his servitude, but also from a desire to promote the salvation of his relatives and friends. He invited the Methodists to the village: but whether his parents were poor, or inimical to the reception and residence of an itinerant preacher beneath their roof, is not now known; certain, however, it is, that the first preacher who visited the village, made a public-house his place of rest, and occasioned a considerable sensation among the inhabitants. Some of the colliers threatened to kill him; and, that they might go through the work with spirit, they inflamed themselves with intoxicating liquor. When sufficiently prepared for deeds of rebellion of any description, they assembled before the house in which the preacher was lodged, vociferating, "Bring him out." The preacher immediately obeyed the summons, and stood in the doorway; the shout was re-echoed, "Bring him further out;" others, a little more temperate, said, "We will hear him preach before he is molested." After the tempest had abated sufficiently to render his voice audible, he began to preach; and he had not proceeded far, when perfect stillness reigned over the whole of his auditory.

CHAP. XVII.

Mr. Bardsley—Letter from Mr. Wesley—Mr. Shirley's counterpart to his famous circular—Messrs. Moulson, Garnet, and Boon—Preachers' board, salary, and other financial matters—Invidious contrasts between ancient and modern itinerancy—A controversial spirit—Interruptions of public worship—Fatal effects of prosperity without increased watchfulness and diligence—Some account of the extent of the circuit and the labours of the preachers—Little things assume importance when associated with greater—Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of Hoyland—Providential escape—Number of leaders and places of meeting.

1771. FROM a letter of Mr. Bardsley's to Mr. George Shadford, it appears that success attended the labours of the preachers on the circuit: but the time of changing drew near, which, with Mr. Bardsley, during the life of his mother, was a time of some anxiety.* He, as well as she herself, was ever desirous of hovering at a moderate distance round home; and to the honour of Mr. WESLEY may it be spoken, that he studied to meet and cherish this feeling as far as circumstances would admit. He wrote to him thus, when appointed for Derbyshire:—

“ *Bristol, August 5, 1771.*

“ Dear Sammy,

“ I had intended you for a more distant circuit, where I believe you would have been exceeding useful.

* One of the most artless and touching monuments of filial affection and respect might have been raised to the memory of this good man, from his different letters and papers, that would have done honour to human nature and to Christianity. The tender solicitude which he manifested for the salvation of his mother is almost inexpressible. Fortunately for these pages, after a variety of transfers from person to person, tithings, burnings, and circuitous routes, those portions of the papers were preserved which alone could throw light on several parts of the History of Methodism in Sheffield, preserved unintentionally, and met

But we can hardly shew tenderness enough to an aged parent. Therefore, for your mother's sake, I will alter my design, and appoint you for the Derbyshire circuit, which you know borders on that of Manchester.

“Take care to walk closely with God, and to exhort others so to do. Be instant in season, and out of season. Encourage all to expect salvation *now!* I am

“Your affectionate brother,

“J. WESLEY.

“To Mr. Samuel Bardsley, at Mr. James Walker's, in
“Sheffield.”

At the Conference held at Bristol the day after the date of Mr. WESLEY's letter, Messrs. Daniel Bumstead, Garnet, and Moulson, were appointed to labour in the Sheffield circuit,—one preacher more than the year preceding. Mr. WESLEY observes, of this Conference, “We had more preachers than usual, in consequence of Mr. Shirley's circular letter. At ten on Thursday morning he came, with nine or ten of his friends: we conversed freely for about two hours; and, I believe, they were satisfied, that we were not such ‘dreadful heretics’ as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith.”* This famous circular has often been read by both Methodists and others†, but few of the present race have seen its counterpart; perhaps the one sent to Mr. Bardsley while in Sheffield, is the only one of the originals now forthcoming; and as a curiosity of its kind, a correct copy is here subjoined, to shew the Methodists in Sheffield, the dreadful heresy of which their preachers were suspected, and the due pains taken to correct the evil.

“The DECLARATION of the Rev. JOHN WESLEY and others, concerning the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770. To which is subjoined the

with by the writer in a way in which they would have been for ever lost to the work, had it not been for a particular providence which led him nearly 200 miles from Sheffield, and the same distance from the place where the papers were first deposited, just at that stage of the History when they became necessary.

* Journals, vol. v. p. 32.
p. 221., where it is inserted.

† See Fletcher's Works, vol. ii.

Rev. Mr. Shirley's *acknowledgement of his mistake*, concerning those Minutes.

“ WHEREAS the doctrinal points in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, August 7, 1770, have been understood to favour *Justification by Works*: Now, the Rev. JOHN WESLEY and others, assembled in Conference, do declare, That we had no such meaning; and that we *abhor* the doctrine of Justification by Works, as a most perilous and abominable doctrine. And as the said Minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, That we have no *trust* or *confidence* but in the alone *merits* of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST for Justification. And though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) *who doth not good works*, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in *meriting* or *purchasing* our Justification from first to last, *either in whole or in part*.

“ Signed by the Rev. Mr. WESLEY and fifty-three preachers.”

“ Mr. SHIRLEY's Christian respects wait on Mr. WESLEY. The Declaration agreed to in Conference, the 8th of Aug., 1771, has convinced Mr. Shirley he had mistaken the meaning of the doctrinal points in the Minutes of the Conference held in London, August 7, 1770; and he hereby wishes to testify the full satisfaction he has in the said Declaration, and his hearty concurrence and agreement with the same.

“ Mr. WESLEY is at full liberty to make what use he pleases of this.

“ August 10, 1771.

“ Bristol: Printed by William Pine, Wine-street.”

It is worthy of notice, that Mr. Thomas Olivers stood up in the open Conference, and stood *alone* as the opposer of the above Declaration, refusing to sign his name with Mr. WESLEY and the rest of the brethren, He contended for the expressions employed in the Minutes, and maintained that any concession or alteration would be a triumph gained by the Calvinists, who, he said, had already begun to rejoice. The “*use*,”

however, which Mr. WESLEY made of Mr. Shirley's letter would operate as a check upon every exulting spirit, since it was as widely circulated on a fly sheet.

With regard to the preachers stationed here at the Conference, and whose names are on the Minutes for the year, only two of them entered upon the work. From some cause, or for some reason, now unknown, Mr. Moulson never came to Sheffield; nor can the smallest information be received of him as a travelling preacher, either traditional or historical. Mr. Charles Boon, appointed for the Lincolnshire west circuit, supplied his place. As Mr. Joseph Garnet will receive no further notice, it may be observed, that he entered the Christian ministry as an itinerant in 1768, and died in the work in 1775. Mr. Geo. Robinson writes thus to Mr. WESLEY from Lincolnshire, respecting his death:—“There has been a stir amongst the people ever since that dear man of God, Mr. Joseph Garnet, died at my house. His dying prayers are about to be answered. I think myself highly favoured that I had him five weeks before he died.”*

The number of members in Society in Sheffield was between two and three hundred; and throughout the circuit, in connexion with the town, six hundred and fifty-two, an increase of fifty-five in the course of the preceding twelve months. This seems to have been one of the most flourishing periods of its minority. There appears a small draw-back on the face of the Minutes for the year, in the grant of £30 : 10 : 6d. to the circuit by the Conference, indicative of considerable pecuniary embarrassment, which, in Methodism, does not always comport with great spiritual prosperity. But this may be accounted for on two grounds; first, on that of an additional preacher, which brought an additional burthen, a burthen which was more than commensurate with the increase of members; and secondly, the taking and furnishing of a house for the superintendent and his family. Till now the preachers took up their residence with the principal friends. A house was taken in the

* Meth. Mag. 1787, p. 498. There is also a notice of the manner in which he was brought to God, in the Life of Mr. Hanby, Meth. Mag. 1780, p. 510.

lane leading from the Hartshead, past the front of the Iris-office, into the upper part of High-street. Here it was that the first house stood, and yet stands, entirely appropriated to the use of a Methodist preacher and his family, together with the single brethren who might be on the circuit at the same time. The superintendent had £3 per quarter for himself, £3 per quarter for his wife, 2s.4s. per week board for himself and his family, and 1s. per week for servant's wages and board. On these inconsiderable sums, not less than from five to seven or eight persons had to subsist. Such were the temporal advantages reaped by Methodist preachers, many of whom had left comfortable homes, and any of whom might have earned as much by dint of mere manual exertion; and for these they had to travel from ten to thirty miles frequently in the day, preach every evening in the week and often at five o'clock in the morning, take the same pulpit-exercise three times at least every Lord's day, meet Societies, renew tickets, visit the sick, exposed to all weathers, and frequently the meanest lodgings, and, as the climax of the whole, to sustain the angry browbeatings of the rich, and the stripes and insults of the rude: and yet even this salary was deemed too much by such as never contributed a farthing towards it, and with this they were not unfrequently charged as persons who were courting a life of ease, living upon the public, and fattening on the produce of their office. It was only the year preceding this, that Dr. Johnson said to Boswell, "Whatever might be thought of some Methodist teachers, he could scarcely doubt the sincerity of that man, who travelled nine hundred miles in a month, and preached twelve times a week; for no adequate reward, merely temporal, could be given for such indefatigable labour."*

Some persons, even among ourselves, who would preserve both Methodism and its preachers in a state of nonage, are fond of expatiating on past scenes, and by an invidious contrast between early and modern times, pour their dissatisfaction into the ears of others. The good sense that prevails in the Methodist body at large,

* Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. ii. p. 235.

has reduced these croakers to a very slender number; and every little rent experienced carries off a certain portion of them. Let such as are so fond of contrast—so fond of bringing us back to early times, go thither themselves in the wages they receive, in the rents they pay, in the articles they dispose of; and let them consult the whole History of Methodism, especially Mr. Myles's chronological list of the preachers, and they will find that such was the *excessive labour* required from the small number of persons employed, and such the hardships endured, that, with only a few exceptions, human nature absolutely sunk under the fatigue and pressure, and the preachers were either obliged to desist for want of strength for the work, or dropped prematurely into the grave, after labouring only a few years. Very few were able to support it any length of time. They were chiefly those of cooler spirits and iron constitutions, that bore up under the first buffetings of the tempest, and lived to see the receding waves, retiring like the tide into the bosom of an unruffled sea. It is left, also, for the arithmetic of such persons, to calculate whether, in the issue, the excessive labour of five or ten years, will not be exceeded, in substantial usefulness to mankind, by the still more moderate, though far from easy exertions, of from thirty years to half a century. But to return to the narrative.

After Mr. Bumstead had occupied his new residence some time, he removed to a more eligible situation in Pinstone-lane, nearly opposite the New Church. This house was continued some years, and was sufficiently large for the accommodation of the young preachers.

Mr. Fletcher was now nearly in the warmest part of some of his polemical engagements, on certain doctrinal differences which subsisted between the Methodists and the Calvinists; and from the generally agitated state of the two bodies, it gave too much of a controversial tone to the discourses of those of the preachers whose inclination and genius might lead them that way. Mr. Bumstead was one of those men who had entered into the more subtle parts of the controversy; and when his text bore upon any of the main points of difference, he did not hesitate to state his opinion freely, for the sake of settling

the minds of those of his hearers, whose connections led them into the society of persons of opposite sentiments. On one of these occasions, while preaching on, “Is there no balm in Gilead?” &c. * a person of the name of Samuel Brammer, who had been many years in Society, but had recently joined himself to the Calvinists, stood up in Mulberry-street Chapel, and exclaimed, “That is false doctrine; I will prove it.” At such conduct, the congregation was thrown into a state of confusion, and some of the friends were disposed to take proper measures for the purpose of ridding the place of a disturber. “Let him alone, let him alone,” said Mr. Bunstead, very calmly; “take no notice of him, he is drunk.” After a very short but significant pause, he added, “I do not mean to say that the man is drunk with wine, but he is intoxicated with his opinions:” and then proceeded with his discourse. Brammer felt this, muttered a few words, and sate down. He went to Mr. Bumstead’s house next morning, and after cavilling the space of an hour, retired; following him occasionally from place to place, while he was on the circuit, and endeavouring to provoke him to engage in disputation.

It was not only by occasional interruptions, such as Brammer’s, and by the assembly of a lawless mob, that Mulberry-street congregation was disturbed, but by the relations of those who had joined Society; thus verifying the truth of that Scripture declaration, “I came not to send peace, but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.”† The wife of one of the members, of the name of Wood, furnished a practical comment on this text; and such was the virulent spirit she indulged, that the worship of God was frequently disturbed by the rudeness of her behaviour; while at other times she would have stolen her husband’s hat out of the chapel, and have suffered him to go home without one. He endured the whole with humility, meekness, and patience; and happy indeed would it have been, if the sequel had, on his own

* Jer. viii, 22.

† Matt. x. 34—36.

part, been equal to the commencement. His patient example so affected her, accompanied by the agency of the Spirit of God upon her heart, that she became a truly religious character. No sooner was her enmity slain, than he began to sink into a state of indifference, left the Society, attended chapel occasionally, and never became a member more; thus, while she illustrated the veracity of the word of God, affording an exemplification of the old apostrophe of the sun and the wind and the traveller. The traveller could not be induced to throw off his outward garment during the tempest; but when the sun arose, and he began to burn under its rays, he soon threw aside his drapery. An instance of a similar kind came under the observation of the writer, in Yorkshire. A young man who lived with his uncle, was greatly persecuted by him for joining the Methodists. The old gentleman threatened to turn him out of doors, and to cross him out of his will. Threatenings and promises were alike useless; the nephew persevered in serving God according to the dictates of conscience, at the hazard of every earthly prospect. By some means the uncle became reconciled to him a little before his death, and left him considerable property. On coming into possession of his uncle's effects, he left the Methodist connexion, and became a complete man of the world. Alas, how many instances have there been of persons braving the storms of adversity and persecution, but who have been melted into a compliance with moral evil as soon as the warm sun of prosperity has shone upon them!

Husbands, on the other hand, who would have deemed it irreverent to behave improperly in any other place of worship, supposed they were authorized to proceed at any length they might judge proper in a Methodist chapel. Hence it was, that females were frequently dragged out of the chapel or ordered home without any ceremony. In this way a good woman of the name of Wilson was often served, and the congregation disturbed. The key of the house, or any other thing, real or imaginary, true or false, was rendered the occasion of giving vent to the enmity of the human heart. It was on a watch-night that her husband availed

himself of the key, an old trick, to throw the congregation into a state of confusion. Mr. Bumstead was engaged in prayer when he shouted out for it, and prayed earnestly that the Lord would grant him "the *key* of knowledge." He asked a question, expressive of his chagrin, and left the chapel.

On the general state of the circuit, the labours, and different routes of the preachers, the following extract of a letter from Mr. Boon to Mr. Bardsley will afford some satisfaction:—

"*Sheffield, Nov. 30, 1771.*

" My dear Brother,

" I sincerely thank you for the many good wishes contained in your last, and pray that the Lord would pour into your soul all the blessings you ask of Him for your friend. May Jesus, the kind Keeper of Israel, ever preserve you, and may you ever be under his guidance. Governed by him, we are in the way to safety, peace, and joy !

" It is a source of gratitude to me, that my lot is cast here; and I am more deeply convinced than ever of the necessity of diligence in the work of the Lord. To do that work as it ought to be done, requires all our strength, and the due improvement of all our time.

* * * * *

" We are free from all distractions. God is truly among us in Sheffield. I have never preached in it one Sabbath-day, without joining some persons to the Society. The congregations are much larger than they were; and at Doncaster, Rotherham, and some other places, they are nearly doubled. It is great encouragement when persons are willing to come and hear the word preached. My fellow-labourers and I are united in love, and we are striving for those things which make for peace, and whereby we may edify one another.

" With regard to some of those after whom you inquire, Mr. Wood, of Denby Dike, has lost his partner and his eldest daughter of a severe fever, and the rest of the family, twelve in number, were all afflicted with it at the same time. The person to whose stable our

horses were wont to go at Shipley * is dead, and poor F. is extremely ill. The remainder are well in health, but some of the young people, I am afraid, are growing weary in well-doing. I have delivered your message to the children in every place. Mr. Booth has delivered your letters to the Rev. Mr. Hutton, who talks of either writing to you, or of seeing you.

“ Mr. Matt. Mayer has been at Sheffield; his stay was short, and I was unable to see him. Sister Drake, of Sheffield, after whom you inquire, is well, and in a state of religious prosperity. To Mr. James Walker, I am sincerely attached, as well as yourself; together with many others.

“ I cannot furnish you with an accurate plan of the round; but I will give you a slight sketch. In Sheffield, where I find much freedom in speaking, I preach about six times in three weeks. I shall be at Doncaster next Saturday and Sunday; the Sunday after at Rotherham; and the Sunday succeeding that again at Sheffield; at which places I preach every third Sunday; I am at Cantley every sixth Sunday and Monday, and at Whiston every third Tuesday, where there is an increase both of hearers and members. I preach at Rawmarsh also every third Wednesday, at which place the Society is in good earnest, and at Rotherham every third Thursday. We each preach at Sheffield on the week days, Monday and Thursday: and the country preacher takes the Park on a Friday. In the latter place, there are three or four houses in which we preach alternately, and I hope good will be done. All the other places have preaching once a fortnight. I left Sheffield last Tuesday, went to the Bridge †, to Eyam and Hallam, and am now on my way to Doncaster. On the succeeding visit to Doncaster, I shall proceed thither from Hackinthorpe, by way of Whiston. Such is a short sketch of a part of our plan; but I trust in the event of our exchanging a month towards April, according to present arrangements, to give you a fuller account.

* A village a few miles from Huddersfield, which formed one of the boundaries of the circuit in that direction. † Grindleford Bridge.

"Part of this letter was written at Eyam, and brother and sister Bennison, who were at my right hand at the time, requested me to remember them to you in Christian love."

In another letter, dated December, Mr. Boon observes, "We have had two bad cases lately in Sheffield, brothers S. and R. have been two great offenders against both God and man." Christian Societies ought to be thankful for the smallest prosperity; but in the midst of all, they have often to be reminded of that salutary caution, "Rejoice with trembling."

Mr. Boon began to itinerate in the year 1770, and fell a victim to a rapid atrophy in 1795, in the 45th year of his age. An account of his Christian character and death, both of which may be read with interest, is inserted in the *Methodist Magazine*.* Mr. Myles fixes the commencement of his itinerancy in 1771, but letters in his own hand-writing prove him to have been stationed in Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire prior to his coming into Yorkshire.

The few places noticed by Mr. Boon, form but an inconsiderable part of the number included in the circuit; nor can we ascertain from them the full extent of ground the preachers had to traverse. The circuit at this time extended to the north as far as Hemsworth, a village in the neighbourhood of Pontefract; and to the north-east as far as Thorne.

An old memorandum book of Mrs. Johnson's, of Hoyland, comprising the domestic and other events of this and the year preceding, fell into the hands of the writer, which was perused with interest and curiosity, and was of no small importance in ascertaining dates. A reference was made to particular days, which were devoutly distinguished above others, for particular providential occurrences, exciting the warmest gratitude to God. The texts also, which formed the ground-work of the discourses delivered by Messrs. Woodcock, Bardsley, Bumstead, Boon, Garnet, and others, were distinctly marked, not only as remembrancers, but many

* For 1798, pp. 180-183.

of them apparently as pious memorials of the good received under them; a practice carried to its perfection by that man of order and of God, Mr. George Newton, of Stainbro' Lodge, Thorncliffe. The class of texts dwelt upon, form a good criterion of the men and their preaching: they were such texts as, Job xxii. 21, Isa. xlviii. 17, Isa. ix. 21, Jer. xxix. 13, John i. 12--v. 40--viii. 31, 32, Rom. viii. 1, 2, 14--xiii. 12, Gal. vi. 16, Phil. iv. 19. As preachers, they were more experimental and practical, than doctrinal; constantly digging about the heart and lopping off sin from the life; pressing upon the conscience the necessity of the new birth; the high privileges of Christian believers; and urging watchfulness, earnestness, promptitude, and perseverance. It is no wonder that Methodism, or in other words, vital religion, spread as it did, when it had such brave, unsophisticated, apostolic men, to recommend it.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, of Hoyland, continued to entertain the preachers, as their predecessors had done at Barley-Hall and Thriburgh, and to feel the influence of that gospel which they approved and supported. While Mrs. Johnson was on a visit to Daventry, seeing her friends, she wrote to her husband in a strain which fully proves that they were conversant with each other on the subject of personal religion. "My dearly beloved husband,—I received your's with great pleasure, and am glad to hear you are all well. Glory be to God for all his mercies! O may we never forfeit his favour by turning aside from the holy commandments given to us, but continue stedfast in the faith, always abounding in the work of the Lord, who hath called us from darkness into his marvellous light!"

Notwithstanding the two cases alluded to by Mr. Boon, considerable prosperity was experienced by the Society in Sheffield, which was visited in the course of the year by Mr. Kershaw and Mr. Pawson.

A providential escape experienced by Mr. Bumstead, in Mulberry-street Chapel, is worthy of being recorded. The love-feast in those days was held on a Monday afternoon, commencing at two o'clock; as was the case some years afterwards, when Norfolk-street Chapel was built. It was during one of these sacred festivals that

some men were employed in repairing a chimney belonging to one of the adjoining houses. The house was much higher than the chapel; and in the immediate neighbourhood of it was a large sky-light, or glass dome, directly over the pulpit. Whether through carelessness, accident, or design, is not known, but a brick fell from the heights on which the men stood, shot through the glass, and just grazed the shoulder of Mr. Bumstead. Had it varied a few inches in its course, it must have fractured his scull in such a way as to render an escape with life next to impossible. The people perceiving that no material injury was sustained, spontaneously burst forth, in the most affecting manner, into a song of praise; employing that verse which is so often sung, and which will live with the world itself, “Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,” &c.

An increase of members rendered additional leaders necessary: and although some of the older leaders are noticed in an earlier page, it may be agreeable to many to know their number at this period, as well as useful in reporting progress. The following, as far as information can be collected, are the names of such official characters, together with their respective places of meeting.

LEADERS.

PLACES.

Henry Alsop	met his class in Cheney-square, afterwards Coalpit-lane.
Wm. Beard	..... Silver-street.
John Burdett	..... Pinstone-lane, in the preachers' house.
Thomas Grisby	
Samuel Hirst	..... Sims-croft, afterwards Trinity-street.
Wm. Hustler	
Samuel Hemsworth	..... Broad-lane.
Joseph Kitchen	..... Pea-croft.
Samuel Knutton	..... Sims-croft.
John Paramore	..... Pinstone-lane, preachers' house.
George Smith	..... Mulberry-street.
Wm. Tingle	..... Cheney-square.
James Walker	..... Pepper-alley.

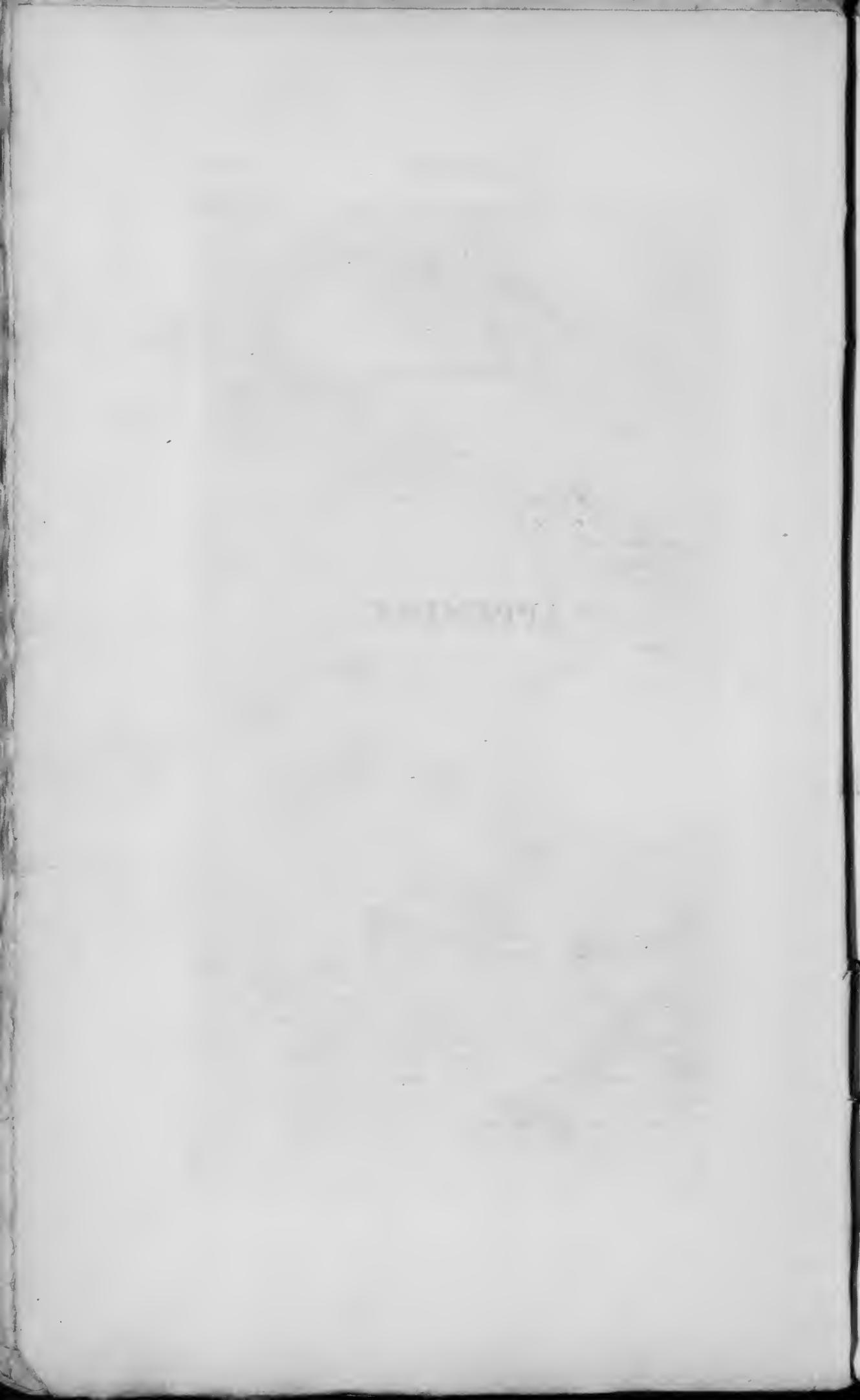
Henry Alsop, who stands first in alphabetical order, is also entitled to a first place in respect of age. He has been already noticed as occupier of the preaching-house, which was pulled down by the mob in 1746. He

was a file-smith by trade, and brought up his family by honest industry. In his attachment to the Methodist doctrines, discipline, and mode of worship, he was constant and firm. He was a conscientious man, enjoyed real religion, and was universally respected. His class met in the house of David Parkin, father of the late Jonathan Parkin, one of the travelling preachers. Henry died in Christian triumph, at an advanced age, some time after the erection of Norfolk-street Chapel. Mr. Jonathan Beet met in his class after the year 1780. Very different were the latter days of Joseph Kitchin, who fell from his stedfastness.

APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX,

WITH CORRECTIONS.

1739. Pages 8, 9.

To the account already given of John Bennet, the following, which Mr. George Morley read in a manuscript life of him, written by himself, may properly be subjoined. On his leaving Mr. Bagshawe, as clerk, he commenced the business of a regular carrier between Sheffield and Macclesfield, and employed a number of pack-horses for the purpose of conveying goods across the moors, over which carts and waggons were unknown to pass, till several years afterwards. When he was engaged in this concern, he was invited, as has been stated, to hear David Taylor preach on Sheffield-moor. Prior to his going to hear David, he had conceived the uttermost contempt of his person and proceedings, though he had never seen him. When he approached the place, such was the concourse of people met on the occasion, that he could not hear a word which was delivered; but on hearing them sing, he was, to employ his own words, "deeply affected with the mere power of sound." He was also, on seeing David, a good deal prepossessed in his favour. At the close of the discourse, J. Bennet's friend signified his intention to leave, and beckoned on him to go; but he appeared deprived of the power, was determined to wait till the end of the service, though he could scarcely assign any reason for such a wish. He became thoughtful, and expressed a desire to have an interview with David. His friend, who was a printer, told him he could soon procure that, as he had been employed to print some things for him, and had an acquaintance with him. Through the instrumentality of Bennet's friend, David and he were brought together; and after conversing some time, he pressed David to go and preach in his father's house, at Chinley, in Derbyshire. David remarked in reply, "I have no objection to go, if it will only be for the glory of God, and the good of souls." "The good of souls!" thought Bennet, "what can that mean?" declaring afterwards, "that he knew as little about his soul as the sole of his shoe." The language was to him perfectly novel, and he began to feel that he had gone too far in asking David to go into Derbyshire, without first

consulting others who were immediately concerned. He took care, therefore, to add, in hope of extricating himself from the engagement, that he would speak to his parents on the subject, and that he should communicate the result to David in the course of a fortnight. The fortnight had nearly rolled on; J. Bennet had returned from Derbyshire; he was afraid to meet David: and resolved that he would not go to see him. It had repeatedly occurred to him in the interval, "What a fool I am! what do I care for this man's preaching! The people in Derbyshire do not want him; my parents do not want him, and know nothing of him." Such thoughts as these harassing his mind, he never once named the circumstance to his parents, nor yet any knowledge of the existence of such a person as the preacher he had heard. David, however, bore in his recollection the engagement, and sent for John Bennet to his warehouse. Being at that moment particularly engaged, he sent back the messenger with the tidings of such engagement, stating that he would wait on Mr. Taylor as soon as business would permit him, hoping at the same time to escape by this method. He put off the visit as long as he could, and till indeed he concluded that David, tired with waiting, would be gone. To his no small mortification, he found David at his post; and when asked the result, "told him," to employ again his own language, "a flat lie,"—that he had asked his parents, and they were willing he should preach in their house. A day was accordingly fixed for the visit; and as Bennet was going across the moors on business, he agreed to meet David at a public-house between Chinley and Sheffield, provided the weather should be favourable. More dissatisfied than before, for involving himself in such difficulties with a man, who, to him, was a perfect stranger, Bennet scarcely knew how to proceed; and, afraid lest David should pay an unexpected visit, only related the circumstance to his parents on the morning of the day on which they were to meet each other at the public-house. The father and mother united in declaring, that no preacher should enter their doors; that they had a very excellent dissenting minister in Mr. Clegg, under whose preaching they sate, and who would be offended with them for introducing a stranger; and that if he persisted in his purpose, they should turn both him and the preacher out of doors. Here was another obstacle thrown in his way; and there was only one relieving consideration, and that was—the unfavourable state of the weather. Still, he was uncomfortable, lest David should cross the rude moors, and there should be no one to give him the meeting. He considered, that as he had been the cause of the journey, it was but his duty to go and see whether he would attend to the appointment. Without informing his parents whither he was going, he

mounted his horse, and when he reached the public-house, rejoiced that no one was there for whom he inquired. The rain continued to pour from the heavens, and he began to delight himself with the persuasion that David would not attempt the journey. His eye was directed towards the window, and it was not long before he saw a person on horseback, wending his way towards the door, and dripping with wet. It was David; J. Bennet's expectations were dashed to the ground in an instant; he knew not what to do; to take him forward to Chinley he was afraid, and to send him back was unfeeling and dishonourable. While in this painful dilemma, a second person rode up to the door, and took shelter from the rain. This gentleman recognized David Taylor, and was happy to see him, having heard him preach once on Sheffield-moor. After a few words were exchanged, he pressed David to accompany him to the village where he resided, and preach to the people. At this J. Bennet was greatly rejoiced, and again hoped that he would obtain an honourable acquittance. David told the gentleman of his previous engagement, but intimated that he was willing to do any thing for the best, and would leave it with them to decide in whatever way it should be most agreeable to themselves. Bennet saw deliverance at hand, and resolved, if he once shook off David, he would never more entangle himself with him. The gentleman continued to urge his request, and Bennet gave him up with as good a grace as circumstances would admit. David and the gentleman commenced their route, and John Bennet returned to the house of his parents with buoyant spirits. Another difficulty, alas! was in the way. Though he had not informed his father and mother whither he was going, they suspected the object of his journey; and on re-considering the subject, they concluded, that, as he had invited the stranger, who, in all likelihood was on his way to Chinley, it would be better to give him at least the appearance of a ready reception. Accordingly, during John's absence, they provided seats and fitted up a room for preaching. This might easily have been surmounted, but in addition to it, they had informed the people through the neighbourhood that a stranger would preach at their house that evening, naming the hour. John had to remount, and set off for David, with slender hopes of securing him, to preserve the credit of his parents. He very fortunately met with David, and succeeded with the gentleman to give him up, as he himself had furnished the example. David arrived at Chinley with his guide, and preached to the people. The next day, being the Sabbath, he preached out of doors at Chapel-en-le-Frith, where he was assailed by a mob, headed by one who ought to have known better. David continued there several days, preaching every evening in the different villages

around, accompanied by John Bennet. During the whole of the time, Bennet's mind was unenlightened by the sermons, and unaffected by grace. At the close of each service, it was customary with David to tell the people, that if any of them had any objections to make to any thing he advanced, he would answer them in private, provided such persons would wait upon him. This, though probably done at first from the best of motives, to secure quiet during public service, led to mere meetings of disputation; and it was through these disputations, when persons attended, not to satisfy scruples of conscience, but merely to cavil, that J. Bennet's mind received Divine light; but it was light without warmth; and he continued to listen, till he became master of David's arguments, and began, even before his heart was effectually changed, to assert and defend the new doctrine. It was not long, however, before he was deeply convinced of his depraved state by nature, and, in an agony of spirit, sought and obtained the remission of his sins.

1741. Page 13.

There is an error which has found its way into Mr. Hunter's History of Sheffield and Hallamshire, p. 171, which it may be proper to correct. It was not Mr. *Edward*, but Mr. *James* Bennet, that first received the Wesleyan Methodists into Sheffield. James was the father of *Edward*, and was not a sugar-baker, but a grinder, or employed in some other department of the Sheffield trade. In other parts of this work, where the writer has been guided chiefly by Mr. Hunter, as in pages 34, 43, 45, 56, *James* must be substituted for *Edward*, and in p. 50, the supposition of so early a separation as that suggested, may be omitted by the reader.

1742. Page 38.

The history of Trembath, as related by a person who was perfectly acquainted with him, is remarkable, and in the contemplation of which, it is difficult to determine whether we ought to feel most of pity or of indignation, or whether a large and equal share of both are not due to him. From the character of a trifler, he fell into that of a tippler; and through some of the heaviest domestic calamities that could befall him as a husband, which chiefly originated in his own misconduct, he sunk still deeper—sunk into the character of a drunkard. After Mr. Wesley had met with him in Cornwall, he was sent for to Ireland by his two sons, who allowed him a proper maintainance during the remain-

der of his life. Mr. Walter Griffith visited him in Cork, about 1793 or 1794, when on his death-bed; but he was far from being sufficiently impressed with either his approaching dissolution, or the sublime realities of an invisible world, so captivating to the real Christian. He laboured under a severe paralytic affection, and might possibly feel more than he could express.

1743. Page 41.

It may be a matter of curiosity with some to know, the full extent of John Bennet's round. Mr. George Morley was favoured with an outline of it, in his perusal of the MS. life of that good man, as it existed in 1744, and onward. Chinley, in Derbyshire, was head quarters. From thence it went on to Macclesfield, in Cheshire; Burslem, in Staffordshire; Alpraham; Chester; Holywell, in Flintshire; passing over the rising town of Liverpool; onward to Whitehaven, in Cumberland; and back to Bolton, in Lancashire, Manchester and Chinley, including many of the intermediate towns and villages. John Bennet kept a regular account of the names of all the persons who met, in what were called *bands* at that period, in the different places. Among these were the names of George Pearson and Samuel Rowbotham, of Macclesfield; Mr. Sims, of Alpraham; and David Yates, of Manchester, father of the present Joseph Yates, Esq. a leader in the Methodist Society. Unless a chapel has been built at Alpraham, in Cheshire, recently, preaching has been continued in the same dwelling-house from the commencement of Methodism, a period of upwards of *eighty* years.

Pages 43.

The account of the opposition which Mr. Charles Wesley experienced at Thorp, and which belongs to the year preceding that prescribed for it in the History, p. 46, 47, will, together with the demolition of the first preaching-house at Sheffield, be further illustrated. May 25, 1743, says Mr. Charles Wesley, 'In the afternoon I came to the flock in Sheffield, who are as sheep among wolves; the minister having so stirred up the people, that they are ready to tear the Methodists in pieces. At six o'clock, I went to the Society-house, next door to our brother Bennet's. Hell from beneath was moved to oppose us. As soon as I was in the desk, with David Taylor, the floods began to lift up their voice. An officer, in the army, contradicted and blasphemed. I took no notice of him, but sang on. The stones flew thick, striking the desk and the people. To save them, and the house from

being pulled down, I gave out, that I should preach in the street, and look them in the face. The whole army of the alien Chaldeans followed me. The captain laid hold on me, and began rioting; I gave him for answer, 'A Word in Season, or Advice to a Soldier.' I then prayed particularly for His Majesty King George, and preached the gospel with much contention. The stones often struck me in the face. I prayed for sinners, as servants of their master, the devil; upon which the captain ran at me with great fury, threatening revenge for abusing, as he called it, 'The King, his master.' He forced his way through the brethren, drew his sword, and presented it to my breast. I immediately opened my breast, and, fixing my eye on his, and smiling in his face, calmly said, 'I fear God and honour the King.' His countenance fell in a moment; he fetched a deep sigh, and putting up his sword, quietly left the place. He had said to one of the company, who afterwards informed me, 'You shall see if I do but hold my sword to his breast, he will faint away.' So perhaps I should, had I only his principles to trust to; but if at that time I was not afraid, no thanks to my natural courage. We returned to our brother Bennet's, and gave ourselves up to prayer. The rioters followed, and exceeded in outrage all I have seen before. Those at Moorfields, Cardiff, and Walsal, were lambs to these. As there is no king in *Israel*, I mean no magistrate in Sheffield, every man doth as seemeth good in his own eyes." While Mr. Wesley and the congregation were within, the mob formed the design of pulling down the preaching-house. "It was a glorious time," says he, "with us: every word of exhortation sunk deep, every prayer was sealed, and many found the spirit of glory resting upon them." The next day the house was completely demolished, not one stone being left upon another. "Nevertheless," said Mr. Wesley to a friend, "the foundation standeth sure, and our house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This day he again preached in the street, somewhat more quietly than before. In the evening the rioters became more noisy, and threatened to pull down the house in which Mr. Wesley lodged. He went out to them; read the riot act, and gave a suitable exhortation, and they soon afterwards separated, when peace was again restored.

Pages 46, 47.

May 27, Mr. Charles Wesley preached at five o'clock in the morning on these words, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." He observes, "Our hearts were knit together, and greatly comforted:

we rejoiced in hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, who had now delivered us out of the mouths of the lions. David Taylor informed me, that the people of Thorp, through which we should pass, were exceedingly mad against us. So we found them as we approached the place, and were turning down the lane to Barley-Hall. The ambush rose, and assaulted us with stones, eggs, and dirt. My horse flew from side to side, till he found his way through them. They wounded David Taylor in the forehead, and the wound bled much. I turned back, and asked, what was the reason that a clergyman could not pass without such treatment. At first the rioters scattered, but their captain rallying them, answered with horrid imprecations and stones. My horse took fright, and turned away with me down a steep hill. The enemy pursued me from afar, and followed shouting. Blessed be God, I received no hurt, only from the eggs and dirt. My clothes indeed abhorred me, and my arm pained me a little from a blow I received at Sheffield." See *Charles Wesley's Life*, pp. 153, 156.

1749. Page 84.

Mr. Whitfield was in these parts at this time. "At Leeds," it is remarked, "the congregation consisted of above 10,000 souls. Thither he was invited by the Rev. Mr. Wesley's ministers, and also by the Societies. And the Rev. Charles Wesley announced him from the pulpit. The season being too far advanced, he did not proceed to Scotland, but returned to London, having preached thirty times in Yorkshire; in Cheshire and Lancashire ten. He was also at Sheffield and Nottingham. The congregations were mostly peaceable and attentive, only in one or two places he was rudely treated." *Seymour's edition of Dr. Gillies' Life of Whitfield*, pp. 110-113.

1750. Page 87.

In the early part of the summer of 1750, Mr. Whitfield again visited Sheffield and its vicinity. "He went," says his biographer, "to Rotherham and Sheffield. And at the end of May was at Leeds." Mr. Whitfield himself remarks relative to this journey, and in reference to Yorkshire, "Methinks I am now got into another climate, where there are many of God's people." See *Life*, p. 116.

1752. Page 89.

No less happy was Mr. Whitfield in his journey of 1752, than in that of 1750. He writes thus to a friend from Sheffield, November 1st,—“ Since I left Newcastle, I have scarce known sometimes, whether I have been in heaven or on earth. At Leeds, Birstal, Howarth, Halifax, &c. thousands and thousands have flocked twice or thrice a day to hear the word of life. I am now come from Bolton, Manchester, Stockport, and Chinley. Yesterday I preached in a church. Four ordained ministers, friends of the work of God, have been with me. The word has run so swiftly at Leeds, that friends are come to fetch me back, and I am now going to Rotherham, Wakefield, Leeds, York, and Epworth. God favours us with weather; and I would fain make hay whilst the sun shines. O that I had as many tongues, as there are hairs upon my head! the ever-loving, ever-lovely Jesus should have them all! Fain would I die preaching.” See *Life*, p. 123.

1753. Page 93.

Sheffield appears to have been favoured with a regular succession of visits from Mr. Whitfield, with shorter intervals of time between than at any other period of his public ministry. “ He preached at Leicester, Nottingham, and Sheffield,” it is said, “ multitudes every where flocking like doves to their windows, to receive the word of eternal life. In his way to Leeds, he preached at Rotherham and Wakefield; at the former place, he had met with such opposition from the mob, that he almost resolved to preach there no more. But he was now convinced of the rashness of such a step; for some who had been bitter persecutors, now gladly received him within their doors, acknowledging that God had made him instrumental in their conversion.” See *Life*, p. 127.

1756. Page 100.

Writing from Sunderland, Aug. 14, 1756, Mr. Whitfield again remarks, “ How swiftly doth my precious time fly away! It is now a fortnight since I came to Leeds; in, and about which, I preached eight days, thrice almost every day, to thronged and affected auditories. On Sunday last, at Bradford, in the morning, the auditory consisted of about ten thousand; at noon, and in the evening, at Birstal, to near double the number. Though hoarse, I was helped to speak so, that all heard. Next morning I took a sorrowful leave of Leeds; preached at Doncaster at noon,

and at York the same night." See *Life*, p. 160. On his return from Scotland to London, in September, it is said, "He stopped at Leeds, and went some time into good Mr. G—— and J——'s round, preaching to great multitudes on the mountains." From the term "round" being employed, which was peculiar to Methodism in those days,—from the initials G. and J.—from a knowledge of the fact, that Mr. Grimshaw's *round* extended from Howarth, through Leeds, and southward to within six or seven miles of Sheffield,—from a pretty well grounded belief that Mr. Jaco was then in the *Leeds round*, which included Sheffield, —and lastly, from Mr. Whitfield's intimacy with Mr. Grimshaw, and his increasing union with the Methodist body, it is fair to infer that he chiefly confined his labours to the Wesleyan field, and that, on his route to London, Sheffield was once more favoured with his powerful ministry.

After Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Charles Wesley preached here. He had not visited these parts for some years. He observes on the occasion, "I delivered my soul, and the people seemed awakened and alarmed. I spake plainly and lovingly to the Society, on continuing in the church: and though many of them were Dissenters and Predestinarians, none were offended." See *Life*, p. 247. The object of this tour was, to prevent a separation from the Established Church, of which there were some grounds of fear in different parts of the Connexion; exhorting them to abide wherein they were called. It is very probable that both Methodists and Dissenters understood his meaning, and hence there was no just cause of offence; for by advising such as belonged to the Church to continue in it, he in effect urged the Dissenters to continue in their respective meetings and churches. He wished the Methodists especially, with whom he was immediately connected, not to break off from their former connections, by uniting into a separate party. In doing this he sometimes mentioned the Dissenters, as well as the members of the Church of England, but not always, as in most places these formed the bulk of the Methodist Societies.

1758. Page 125.

The likeness of George Wainwright affixed to the present work, bears, with the addition of deeper characters of age, a strong resemblance to that of Schwansfelder's, and was recognized by all who knew him in his latter days. The right side of the face was enlarged; his head being generally reclined or drooping, through extreme weakness, and the side of his face pressing upon the right

shoulder. His daughter was obliged to support his head while his features were in the act of being sketched.

1760. Page 146.

When Mr. Walter Griffith was in the Bath circuit, in 1800, Mr. Gibbs occasionally superintended a workhouse at Warminster. He was a man of low stature, and was then far advanced in life. Persons filling the office which he sustained, generally find all the grace they possess necessary in the discharge of their duty. Being rather of a sharp spirit, he was not unfrequently severely tried. He occasionally officiated as a local preacher. Before his death, he experienced a deeper baptism of the Spirit of God, and finished in peace.

1762. Page 167.

Nottingham and Leicester were in the Sheffield circuit in 1762. At the former place lived Mr. Matthew Bagshaw, one of the first Methodists, and a local preacher. There was then preaching in a private dwelling in Narrow Marsh. For the better accommodation of a greater number of people, an aperture was made in the ceiling, and two or three planks were taken up, belonging to the second floor, during service, the room serving the purpose of a gallery. From this place, Matthew was committed by the Mayor to the House of Correction, and thither the whole congregation went with him, considering themselves equally culpable in encouraging conventicles. No sooner were they lodged within the walls, than they began to sing and pray, to the annoyance of the keeper, who lodged a complaint against them to that effect to the Mayor. Orders were given to discharge them; and as it was at the instance of the Mayor, they left: but there was no authority for the release of the preacher; and a Quaker continued with him, declaring that he would not quit the place till he was discharged; in consequence of whose firmness Matthew was set at liberty.

1765. Page 198.

"It will be expected that we should not pass over altogether in silence, a Mr. Bryan (Bryant), who preached at Jewry-street, along with Mr. Aldridge, during the early part of his ministry in that place. This gentleman was a native of Yorkshire, and pursued his studies for the ministry in the Countess of Huntingdon's College, at Trevecca. It seems he did not itinerate long in that

connexion. Erasmus, a Greek bishop, having visited London in 1763, laid his hands upon several persons who could not procure ordination from the English bishops. Mr. Bryan being desirous of episcopal ordination, applied to him for that purpose, and easily obtained it. After this, he became minister of a congregation at Sheffield. Having contracted an acquaintance with Mr. Aldridge while at College, it was afterwards maintained by a mutual correspondence; and when Mr. Aldridge settled at Jewry-street, Mr. Bryan constantly spent three months of the year in London, preaching in the pulpit of his friend, who, during the interval, supplied the chapel at Sheffield. Mr. Bryan was afflicted for many years, at intervals, with an unhappy dejection of spirits, which bordered upon derangement. To such a height did his disorder sometimes proceed, that he has attempted, in the frenzy of despair, to make away with himself. Nevertheless, his friends considered him to be a truly good man, and he was enabled, continually, to overcome the temptations of the adversary. He died many years ago, and was buried under his own pulpit at Sheffield."—*Private information.* See Wilson's "*History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting-Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southwark.*" Vol. I. p. 132.

1770. Page 232.

On Monday, Nov. 5, 1770, the affecting news of Mr. Whitfield's death arrived in London, by the Boston Gazette, and also by the letters of several correspondents to their friends. He died on the 30th of the September preceding, at Newbury Port, near Boston, New England. The tidings of his death spread over the kingdom, and were severely felt at Sheffield and Rotherham, at both of which places were to be found the fruits of his ministry. Mr. Keen, of London, had often asked Mr. Whitfield, "If you should die abroad, who shall we get to preach your funeral sermon? Must it be your old friend, the Rev. John Wesley?" His constant answer was, "He is the man." Mr. Keen waited on Mr. Wesley, on the Saturday following, and he promised to preach it on the Lord's day, Nov. 18, which he did, to an extraordinarily crowded and mournful auditory; many hundreds being compelled to depart, who could not possibly obtain admission. In the London Chronicle for the 19th, it was observed, "Yesterday the Rev. John Wesley preached a funeral sermon on Mr. Whitfield's death, in the morning, at Tottenham-court Chapel; and in the evening, at the Tabernacle: the inside of each place was lined with black cloth, and an escutcheon hung on the pulpits. The multitudes that went to hear the sermon exceeded

all belief. The chapel and tabernacle were both filled as soon as they were opened."

Mr. Whitfield was governed by a disinterested concern for the immortal welfare of his fellow-creatures;

"And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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